

Secondary traumatic stress

Responding to the Impact of Trauma-Exposed Work

Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

Hearing about or working around other people's trauma may affect attention, sleep, emotions, or a sense of safety. You do not need to retell the material to acknowledge its impact. Focus on your functioning and the support available within and beyond the workplace.

Use broad descriptions without client identifiers or event details. Stop if the exercise increases distress and seek appropriate support.

Notice changes in functioning

Describe a recent change and when it appears, such as after particular duties or exposure patterns. Do not infer a diagnosis from one reaction.

Choose more than individual coping

Consider confidential supervision, exposure or caseload review, peer support with privacy boundaries, and personal clinical care. Organizational conditions and access to support deserve attention alongside individual needs.

1. What broad work exposure or duty is relevant without describing a client's trauma?**2. What change in my functioning or sense of safety have I noticed?****3. What workplace condition or support needs review?****4. Who can provide confidential consultation or care, and how will I contact them?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Avoid compulsory retelling or group debriefing. Distinguish secondary exposure from personal trauma and broader workload strain. Assess significant symptoms, impairment, and safety through appropriate care; protect client information and do not use this as a screening scale.