Key Definitions

- **Vicarious trauma** – change in the inner experience of the advocate resulting from empathic engagement with a survivor.

- **Secondary traumatic stress** – presence of PTSD symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to trauma (Figley, 2002).

- **Burnout** – a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Leiter & Maslach, 2004).

- **Self-care** – antidotes advocates use to prevent or ameliorate disruptions in their frame of reference due to vicarious trauma.
Key Definitions

- **Compassion fatigue** – a state of tension and preoccupation with traumatized survivors by re-experiencing the traumatic events, avoidance/numbing of reminders, and persistent arousal associated with survivors (Figley, 2002).

- **Compassion satisfaction** – the ability to receive gratification from caregiving (Simon, Pryce, Roff, & Klemmack, 2006).

While we often focus on compassion fatigue, there is a great deal of research on how many people go into roles like advocacy because of the immense satisfaction they receive.
Preventing Burnout

Emotions are contagious

From ProQOL.org, 2015

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Organizational Predictors of Burnout

- Workload – job demands placed on employee given a specified amount of time and resources.
- Control – opportunity for employees to make important decisions about their work, as well as their range of professional autonomy and ability to gain access to resources necessary to do the job.
- Community – quality of social context in which one works, including relationships with management, colleagues, and supervisees.
- Fairness – extent that openness and respect are present in the organization and the decision-making process.
- Values – represent the congruence between the organization’s priorities and the values of the employee.
- Rewards – are staff rewarded for taking care of themselves or for seemingly superhuman abilities to work all the time?

Adapted from Maslach & Leiter, 1997 and Bloom, 2006.
Organizational Predictors of Burnout

**Trauma-organized** – an organization with high levels of burnout and secondary trauma; low levels of compassion satisfaction, high absenteeism, high employee turnover, frequent boundary violations, and professional misconduct.

Adapted from Maslach & Leiter, 1997 and Bloom, 2006.
## Components of Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>- Stress dimension&lt;br&gt;- Emotional and cognitive distancing from work&lt;br&gt;- Poor service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>- Interpersonal dimension&lt;br&gt;- Depersonalization from work&lt;br&gt;- Belief in the inevitability of trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inefficacy</td>
<td>- Self evaluative dimension&lt;br&gt;- Low productivity&lt;br&gt;- Feelings of incompetence</td>
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Adapted from Maslach, Shaufeli, & Leiter, 2011

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Signs of Burnout

- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- A sense one can never do enough
- Hypervigilance
- Diminished creativity
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Minimizing
- Addictions
- Anger and cynicism

- Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
- Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
- Dissociative moments
- Sense of persecution
- Guilt
- Fear
- Grandiosity
- Inability to empathize/numbness

Adapted from Laura van der Noot Lipsky’s *Trauma Stewardship.*
Individual Strategies

1. Regularly assess yourself so you can be proactive if you exhibit signs.
2. Start a go-to self-care list and refer to it for ideas when you feel stuck.
3. Find time for yourself every day and schedule it in. Hold that time sacred.
4. Ask for help, professionally and personally.
5. Create a ritual to transition between work and home.
6. Say “no.” It is a complete sentence on its own.
7. Assess trauma inputs in your environment and seek ways to mitigate them.
Individual Strategies

8. Educate yourself on compassion fatigue. The more you know about it, the more you can prevent it in yourself and recognize it in others.

9. Join a supervision or peer support group. Regular support is helpful to sustainability and curbing feelings of isolation.

10. Attend workshops and professional training.

11. Consider alternative scheduling. This work can involve a lot of night/weekend responsibilities, and nontraditional schedules can help ensure you’re not just working all the time. Survivors deserve 24/7 support. You alone cannot be 24/7 support.

12. Exercise and go outside.
Organizational Strategies (1)

- Provide respite for staff (shared coverage, time off).
- Assign reasonable caseloads. Crisis intervention can be time-intensive and emotionally challenging.
- Offer qualified and consistent supervision. If there is no one qualified to provide this on your campus, contracting out is crucial for both support and guidance.
- Affirm severity and pervasiveness of clients’ trauma and vicarious trauma of staff.
Organization Strategies (2)

- Normalize self-care and ensure leadership is modeling it.
- Address signs of vicarious trauma and center compassion satisfaction.
- Minimize situations with role conflict. A survivor advocate cannot be wearing too many hats at once.
- Provide sufficient vacation time and flexible scheduling.
- Build relationships from a place of empathy and knowledge of impact of compassion fatigue.
Organizational Strategies (3)

- Enable collective decision-making.
- Limit personal liability.
- Provide support for personal therapy or professional support groups.
- Foster a culture of peer support, not competition.
- Provide adequate time for sleep. Advocates should not regularly spend overnights with survivors in the hospital followed by full work days.
Organizational Strategies (4)

- Allow for uninterrupted time to complete tasks. A team approach is crucial to ensure that there is adequate coverage without unrealistic expectations. A one-person program cannot be 24/7 or suitable for walk-ins.
- Increase staff feelings of effectiveness in their roles through training, supporting, and acknowledgment.
- Ensure accessible channels for feedback, both for positive areas and areas that need improvement, to ensure that feedback is not only negative.