

# Conducting trauma-informed research with refugee populations: Maximizing support for refugees, service providers, & researchers



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# Applying a trauma-informed perspective

- Maximizing safety, choice, empowerment, collaboration, and trustworthiness (Fallot & Harris 2001).



# A trauma-informed perspective has relevance beyond clinical work



- Including
  - applications in the design of services & agency procedures
  - guidance for self-care for helping professionals and researchers.

# Trauma can affect us

- Compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma are forms of secondary traumatic stress that may be experienced after interacting with trauma survivors (Barrington & Shakespeare-Finch, 2013; Sansbury, Graves & Scott, 2015).



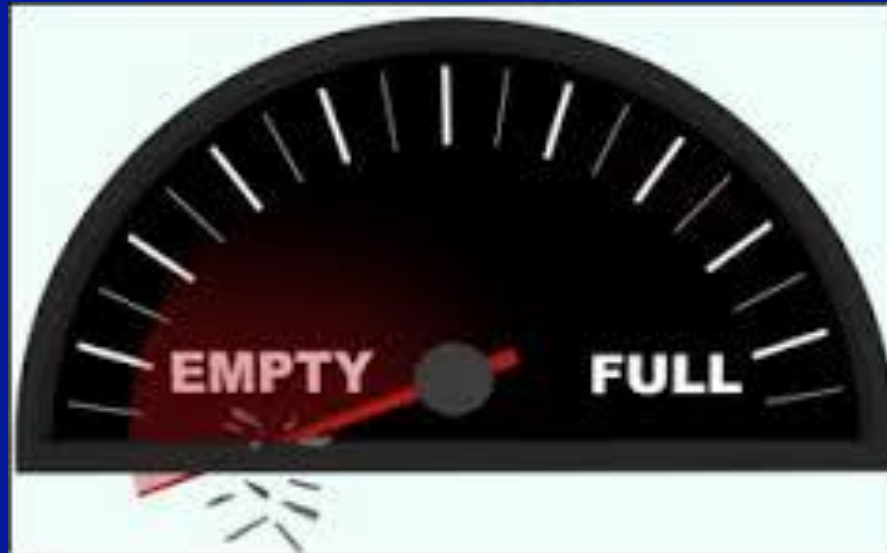
# Trauma can affect us

- Can impact our sense of identity, worldview, and lead to symptoms similar to those experienced by trauma survivors such as re-experiencing, avoidance, sadness, hopelessness, and hyper-arousal.



# Trauma can affect us

- These symptoms may lead to problems in judgment, maintaining professional boundaries, and an ability to effectively help others.



# Trauma can affect us



- Vicarious trauma can be linked with professionals' own histories of trauma (Shannon, et al., 2014); an important consideration given that mental health workers may have a trauma exposure rate as much as six times higher than the national average (Sansbury, et al., 2015).



# Supporting our own wellbeing



- People working with refugees can implement self-care practices to manage stress responses (Sansbury, et al., 2015; Shannon, et al., 2014).
- Be self-aware and mindful of how hearing about traumatic events can effect wellbeing.



# Case example

- Using a trauma-informed protocol to support helping professionals and members of a research team
- Overview of setting, project, and research team



# Case example (cont.)

- Creating a safe place
- Sharing the responsibility



# Case example (cont.)

- Combination of discussing how the work impacted us and debriefing activities
- Check-ins that allowed integration of other life events



# Case example (cont.)

- Debriefing activities included candles, sound of the ocean, guided imagery
- Offer to share with others in the agency





## Conclusion

- Trauma can effect any of us including helping professionals and researchers
- We all deserve safety, choice, empowerment, collaboration, and trustworthiness
- We all have a responsibility to be mindful of our own wellness
- This is not selfish; not comparing how trauma impacts us with how it impacts refugees



# Conclusion

- We all deserve wellness.
- A healthy professional/researcher is better at helping refugees.



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