



UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING VICARIOUS TRAUMA

To help reduce Vicarious Trauma (VT), it is helpful for the person to:

1. Be aware of their own limits and needs, emotions and resources
2. Have balance among life activities
3. Have a connection to themselves, others and something larger.

Once VT is identified, one must undertake to restore their connections to themselves, family and friends and the wider community. It is important to include the following.

Self-care:

- Reconnect with your body through exercise, or massage
- Set limits, particularly on being helpful
- Practice healthy habits, especially sleep and nutrition
- Make connection to something beyond oneself a priority
- Live in the NOW, the moment
- Self-nurturance through:
 - seeking gentleness
 - focussing on pleasure
 - relaxation, play, repeat.

Escape by:

- Getting away from work, especially mentally
- Engage in fantasy and positive imagining or visualisation
- Maximising opportunities for pleasurable positive thoughts
- Looking at beautiful things e.g. the art gallery, flowers, etc.
- Listen to music.

It is also important to:

- Challenge your negative beliefs
- Participate in community-building activities
- Infuse current activities with meaning – the power of simplicity
- Follow a passion.

Professionally:

- Understand the nature and impact of your role
- Give supervision for oneself and others
- Manage your client load and expectations of yourself
- Establish a variety of tasks and clients
- Maintain and manage professional development – positive input
- Seek collegial support / external support e.g. EAP
- Ask for appropriate resources
- Watch boundaries and ensure your personal space is respected.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

www.easa.net.au • help@easa.net.au • PO Box 2077 Greenhills NSW 2323

Ph 0407 918 998 • Emergency 0407 111 003 • For life threatening emergencies call 000

Making a commitment to yourself:

Vicarious trauma can affect us in a variety of ways – personal, professional and organisational. Jot down three things you could do to address various trauma in each category:

Personal:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Professional:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Think both in terms of yourself and what is possible within your team.

Action steps:

- A. Circle of the above in each category that you plan to do this week.
- B. Asterisk the strategies that you could plan to implement this month.