

Day 6- schedule

- Part one: 14.00-14.20 welcome and summary of day 4
- 14.20-15.00 lecture :How to take care of yourself as a helper
 - 15.00-15.15 break
- 15.15-16.00 exercise. how to recognize signals of burn-out symptoms and what are good sources for me to get new energy. Group and plenary
 - 16.00-16.15 short break
- Part two: 16.15-17.00 Summary of the whole workshop, all 6 days
- questions and discussion
- Evaluation



Taking care of myself as
a helper
in the light of
encountering
trauma and strong
emotions



Why this topic?

"The capacity for compassion and empathy seems to be at the core of our ability to do the work, and at the core of our ability to be wounded at work"
figle

How to stay in the field with so much pain and maintain our professional and personal growth?

The helper's challenges

- If you as a helper do not function well, other tools will be difficult to use. It is crucial therefore that you are aware of the wear and tear that make your role challenging, and take steps to ensure that you can function optimally.



Make sure that you as a helper are aware of your boundaries and demarcation

- Many child survivors of sexual violence and abuse, is the feeling that others have fundamentally violated their personal boundaries. This can also affect their relations with helpers.
- Children who have been sexually abused rebuff assistance
- They may be rude, aggressive or dismissive and give the impression that they do not want help, and is often a form of self-protection
- As a way to avoid disappointment, or express an unconscious desire to punish others for the cruelty they have experienced.
- This has nothing to do with you as a helper
- Look behind the child's behaviour or lack of boundaries to understand why it is behaving this way.



3 important questions for the day

What triggers / burdens you most

- In the situation
- In the long term

How do you notice signs of triggers/ or stresses

- In the situation
- In the long term

What do you think is helpful?

- What you can find of good coping strategies
- What do you need from your environment?

How can we as helpers get hurt?

- Secondary traumatic stress (STSD)
- Vicarious/indirect trauma
- Burned out / compassion fatigue

but also:

- Passion for your work
- Post-traumatic growth

Professional Responsibility - Whose Responsibility

Employer: working conditions physically, work quantity, de-briefing possibilities, variation in tasks, support, refill etc.

Colleague group: mutual support, sharing experiences, good feedback processes, "diversion" (e.g. not talking during lunch), co-creating a good company culture etc.

Individual: ability to self-actualize, attentive to own reactions (both in concrete situations and possible wear signals over time)

Secondary traumatisation

- When working with severely traumatised people, close attention should be paid to helpers' reactions. Helpers too are at risk. Page 139
 - **Secondary traumatisation.** Helpers sometimes develop the same symptoms as those they help. They may experience hyper arousal, avoidance or distancing, and commonly experience intrusive images and nightmares after hearing or witnessing the traumatic suffering of survivors. Even a single story can create intrusive images.



Vicarious traumatisatisation

- As they accumulate experience of human suffering, helpers' attitudes may evolve.
- They may become cynical or pessimistic about the world.
- This can cause them to undervalue themselves and others,
 - or lose their belief in the possibility of change;
 - they become indifferent.
- Over time, some helpers may feel that their personality has changed.



Compassion fatigue

- • **Compassion fatigue.** This state resembles vicarious traumatisation but may also affect professionals in caring positions who are highly exposed to, but do not work only with trauma.
- It describes a form of 'burn-out' that, in addition to changing cognitive attitudes, causes people to feel exhausted and demotivated, demoralised, bored and hopeless, leading to sleeping problems and sometimes to somatic difficulties and substance abuse



3 areas can be affected

Symptoms and behaviour

- getting ptsd
like syptoms as
in secondary
traumatisation

Cognitive style - belief systems

- being forgetful
, pessimistic,
cynism as in
vicarious
traumatisation

The emotional state

feeling tired,
depressed, sad,
mood- swings etc
as in compassion
fatigue

Warning signals that may occur after a long period of being a helper

- Wounded ideals
- Cynicism
- Feeling unappreciated or betrayed by the organization
- Loss of spirit
- Grandiose beliefs about own importance
- Heroic but reckless behaviors
- Neglecting one's own safety and physical needs (not needing breaks, sleep, etc.)
- Mistrusting colleagues and supervisors
- Antisocial behavior
- Excessive tiredness
- Inability to concentrate
- Symptoms of illness or disease
- Sleep difficulties
- Inefficiency
- Excessive use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.



Prevention of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue

- Early recognition and awareness are essential to prevent helpers from suffering secondary traumatisation or compassion fatigue.



Group exercise

Along which of the dimensions do you think you first get signals of stress over time

- Body
- Emotions
- Cognitive- thoughts
- Social /relational
- Other behavioural changes

Use 2 minutes to write down where you notice your signals coming from. discuss with the others in your group





pixtastock.com - 50354876

So, what do you do?

- Acknowledge that your reactions are normal and unavoidable
- Consciously try to relax
- Talk to someone with whom you feel at ease
- Express your feelings in ways other than talking: draw, paint, play music
- Listen to what people close to you say and think about the event
- Take care of yourself
- Do grounding exercises



All coping strategies in one model BASIC-Ph

B- Belief and value system

- Remind yourself of the values and meaning behind why we do what we do - values in general (religious, political, humanitarian)
- clearly seems to have a protective effect

A- Affect

- Having access to own feelings, being able to own them, being able to voice them without judgment, being able to regulate them, being able to express them, share them, having self-compassion (not self-pity)
- Also appears to have a strong protective effect

S- social

- To have and to be able to use social support, both for talking about sharing, but also for replenishment (in job counselling, guidance, debriefing)

I - imagery

- Everything related to imagination, play, art seems to strengthen our life

C- Cognition,

- Learning. Understand , develop in a job context. The enormous importance of curiosity

Ph- Physical

- Relaxation techniques, meditation, mindfulness, running, training -
- Even something that requires a little concentration and coordination of several senses

Exercise:

What is your favourite strategy?

If you had to choose one or two more, which is closest?


What concrete things can you do to challenge yourself to improve your coping strategy?

Is your favourite strategy effective? When might it be destructive? (e.g., lots of coffee, soap operas, alcohol, sweets, etc.)

SELF-COMPASSION

- Responsibility for self-protection
- Give attention and friendship to what one feels, acknowledge that what is bad is bad
- Everything that is good (for you) helps against that evil!
- E.g.: walk, read a book, sit on a sofa, be with others.





part two day 6- discussion and evaluation

- Is there anything you want explained even more thoroughly?
- Anything you want to add from your own experience
- What did you find most relevant?
- What was not so relevant for you?
- Any comment you want to add?