

## Secondary Trauma Handout

Secondary Trauma, also known as secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma, occurs when an individual is exposed to the traumatic experiences of others, leading to emotional distress.

### Simple Questions to Begin Assessing Secondary Trauma:

- Why did you get started in this line of work?
- What effects does the work have on you?
- What do you do after a particularly difficult day at work?
- How do those close to you, namely your family and friends, think your work affects you? (Consider asking them directly.)
- What might help strengthen your resiliency?

### ABC's of Self Care and Resilience

#### Awareness

- Be aware of how your responses to stress look and feel like for you, and when they are more likely to be triggered.
- Practice self-regulation plan (e.g., deep breathing, moving around, drinking water, etc.)
- Respect others' decisions, while also knowing what is right for you.

#### Balance

- Create realistic routines, including regular physical/mental breaks!
- Practice reframing and look for opportunities in challenges.
- Communicate expectations/boundaries (e.g., when you need space, when you will be available, etc.).

#### Connection

- Make intentional time to connect with colleagues, friends, and family.
- Notice what is working/going well, capacity, strength & success.
- Find opportunities for humor and laughter.

Children's Home Society of Missouri. (n.d.). Secondary trauma: The effect of traumatized children on caregivers. Jefferson City, MO: Author. <http://modiligentrecruitment.org/documents/Secondary%20Trauma%20Parents.pdf>

# An illustration of types of Secondary Trauma

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## Mindfulness of Breathing Technique

### SETTLE

- Settle into a comfortable sitting position. ▶
- Close your eyes, either partially or completely. ▶
- Soften the muscles in your face and around your eyes. Soften your shoulders, your arms and hands, and your legs. ▶
- Sit with an erect but relaxed posture. ▶
- Take several deep breaths to help you become aware of the sensation of breathing. Then allow your breath to flow in its normal, ever-changing manner. ▶
- Choose to pay attention to your breath either at the tip of your nose or the rims of your nostrils, in your chest or abdomen, or wherever the sensations are the clearest. Once you make a choice, stick with it throughout the period of meditation. ▶
- Continue to keep your awareness focused on the sensations of the breath flowing in and flowing out. If watching the breath at the tip of your nose, notice the sensations in this area of your body as you inhale and as you exhale.

### BREATHE

- Now become aware of all aspects of the breath. We do this by focusing our attention on the different parts of the breath. Each breath has a beginning, a middle, and an end. ▶
- For the in-breath, pay attention to the beginning, middle, and end. ▶
- Notice the space between the in-breath and out-breath. ▶

- Pay attention to the out-breath beginning, middle, and end. ▶
- Notice the space between the out-breath and in-breath. ▶
- Now simply wait peacefully for the next in-breath to arrive. ▶
- Bring awareness to the peace that exists in every breath you take. ▶
- Now put all of your awareness on the entire circle of breath—in-breath, space, out-breath, space.

### RETURN

- Your attention will wander away from the breath. When it does, notice it and appreciate that moment of noticing, of waking up and being mindful. ▶
- Then gently return your attention to the breath and continue to follow it. Do not make any comments or judgments—just gently return your attention to the breath. ▶
- When you are able to stay in contact with the sensations of breathing, you may notice when you are breathing a short breath and when you are breathing a long breath. ▶
- As your awareness of the quality of each breath becomes clearer, you may also begin to notice for yourself whether the breath stays the same or whether it is constantly changing. Each breath is different from the one before. ▶
- Now let your breath calm itself. Just let the breath breathe on its own. Breathing is none of your affair. Thoughts are none of your affair. When we become aware of the wandering mind, we gently bring awareness back to the breath with kindness and gentleness—without judgment or commentary. ▶
- Continue with this meditation until your sitting period is over.

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## Fun and Engaging Self-Care Plan Template

Welcome to your personalized self-care plan! This template is designed to help you create a comprehensive and enjoyable self-care routine to combat the effects of secondary trauma. Remember, self-care is not a luxury; it's a necessity for your overall well-being.

# College Changes Everything:

## Working with Secondary Trauma Self Care Plan

### Mindfulness and Relaxation Practices

- Meditation or Mindfulness App/Channel: \_\_\_\_\_
- Yoga/Tai Chi Class or Video: \_\_\_\_\_
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique: \_\_\_\_\_

### Creative Outlets

- Art Therapy Activity (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpting): \_\_\_\_\_
- Writing/Journaling Prompts or Style: \_\_\_\_\_
- Musical Instrument or Music Therapy Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical Self-Care

- Enjoyable Exercise or Physical Activity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Outdoor Activity or Nature Exploration: \_\_\_\_\_
- Massage, Spa Treatment, or Self-Care Ritual: \_\_\_\_\_

### Social Support

- Support Group or Peer Supervision Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Activities with Friends/Family: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fun Group Activity or Outing: \_\_\_\_\_

### Professional Development

- Continuing Education Opportunity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Supervision or Consultation Resource: \_\_\_\_\_
- Personal Therapy or Counseling: \_\_\_\_\_

## Weekly Self-Care Schedule

Use this section to plan your self-care activities for the week, ensuring a balanced routine.

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

## Reflections and Adjustments

Use this space to reflect on your self-care practices, note any challenges or successes, and adjust as needed: Remember, self-care is an ongoing journey, and it's essential to be kind and patient with yourself. Celebrate your progress and enjoy the process of nurturing your well-being.