

ASCA Fact sheet for managers/supervisors: modelling the message¹

In the therapeutic relationship where there is evidence of the five core trauma-informed principles of *safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment*, there is more likely to be positive client outcomes.

Similarly, in organisations where the five-core trauma-informed principles are embedded in organisational policies and procedures, there is more likelihood of higher productivity and cohesiveness than in organisations where they are not embedded.

Just as post-traumatic stress disorder is perceived as a normal reaction to an abnormal event, vicarious trauma can be understood as a normal reaction to the stress of exposure to multiple and repeated trauma. Vicarious trauma is an ‘occupational hazard’ in services which support traumatized clients.

Organisations that have embedded trauma informed principles to their policies and procedures minimise the risk of clients being re-traumatised and maximise the capacity of staff to better recognise and respond to their own vicarious trauma.

Those in management and supervisory positions can play a key and leading role in modelling trauma informed care. See below for a starting checklist for you to reflect on how your organisation is currently protecting you against vicarious trauma. Feel free to identify additional factors.

CHECKLIST: PROTECTING YOUR STAFF FROM VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Safety

- ◆ Is your work space comfortable and appropriately warm/cool?
- ◆ Can sound proofed space be accessed?
- ◆ Are there opportunities for de-briefing? Is supervision scheduled regularly?
- ◆ How much work-life balance is supported?
- ◆ Is risk managed? If so, how is risk defined and what steps are taken to mitigate it?
- ◆ Are OH & S principles upheld?

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Trustworthiness

- ◆ Are you clear, transparent, fair, equitable and consistent in your communications?
- ◆ Are there formal and informal opportunities for communication?
- ◆ Is there task clarity? Are you clear about your job role? Are those around you clear about your and their job roles?

¹ Copied from ASCA (now Blue Knot Foundation) fact sheet of the same title. See: <http://www.blueknot.org.au>



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Choice

- ◆ Is there opportunity for staff to contribute to decision making /strategic approaches?
 - ◆ Are hours or employment flexible?
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Collaboration

- ◆ Are team building activities on offer?
 - ◆ Is your approach strengths based?
 - ◆ Are there opportunities to seek/ provide peer support? Is there a buddy system?
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Empowerment

- ◆ Are opportunities to reflect on practice promoted? Is there a commitment to continuous improvement?
 - ◆ Are professional development opportunities offered?
 - ◆ Is there an articulated career pathway/ opportunities to grow and develop in the role?
 - ◆ Is mentoring (formal or informal) available?
 - ◆ Are staff supported to complete a wellness assessment and plan?
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