

TRAUMA INFORMED SUPERVISION

Supporting Your Workforce



What is Child Traumatic Stress?



What Is Child Trauma?

- Witnessing or experiencing an event that *poses a real or perceived threat*
- The event overwhelms the child's ability to cope

A thin, white crescent moon is visible in the upper right portion of the image, set against a clear blue sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a lighter, hazy blue and then to a warm orange-yellow gradient at the bottom.

Event vs. Experience

Acute Trauma – Event



Chronic Trauma – Event/Experience



Complex Trauma- Event



Historical Trauma – Event/Experience



Historical Trauma

- Collective and cumulative emotional wounding across generations
- Cumulative exposure to traumatic events that not only affects an individual, but continues to affect subsequent generations
- The trauma is a psychological injury held personally and transmitted over generations

Child Traumatic Grief

- When someone important to the child dies in a sudden or violent manner
- And it is *perceived* as traumatic to the child
- Child's trauma symptoms interfere with his/her ability to grieve

Situations That Can Be Traumatic

(Events)

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment or neglect
- The death or separation from a loved one
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Car accidents
- Bullying
- Scary medical procedures
- Community violence
- Witnessing police activity
- Natural disasters
- Acts of terrorism

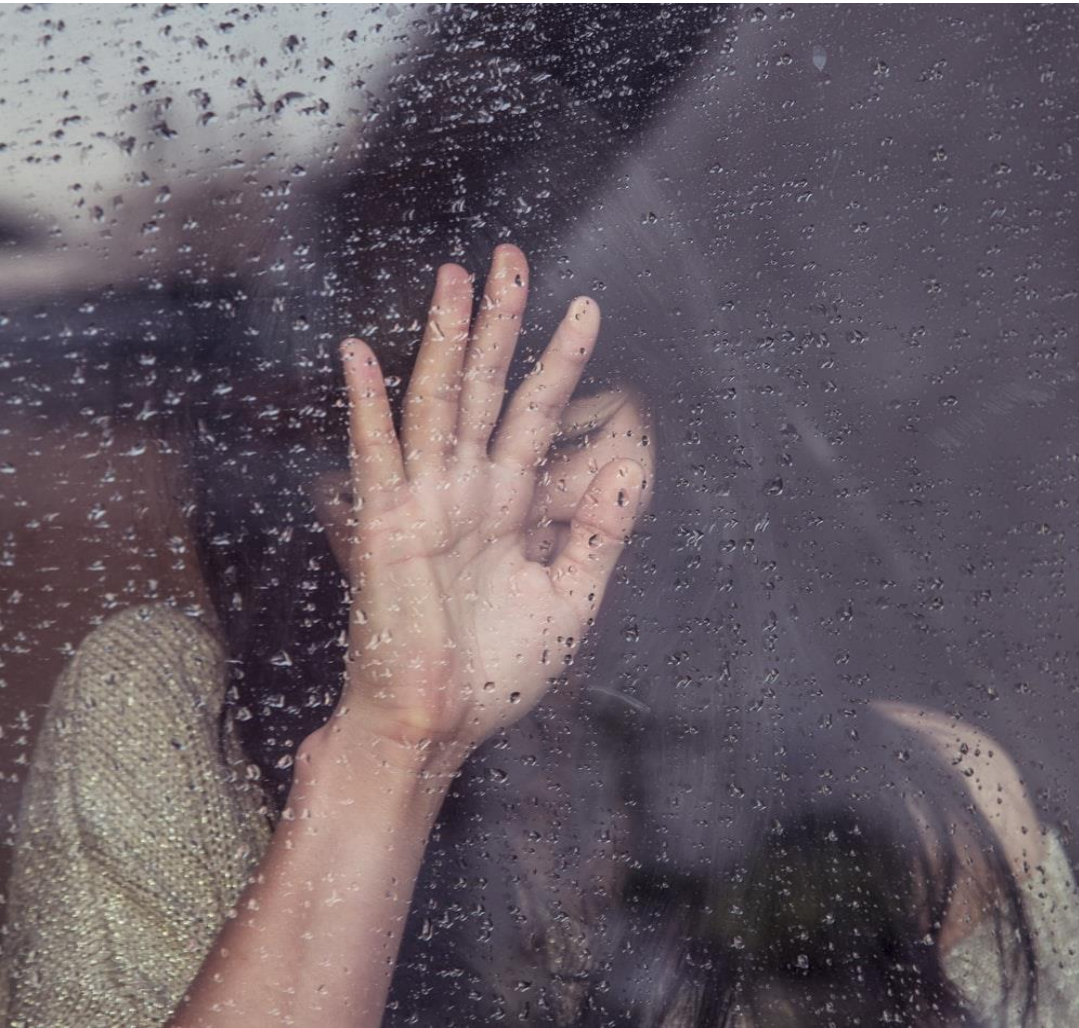
What Is Child Traumatic Stress?

- The physical and emotional responses of a child to events that threaten the life or physical integrity of the child or of someone critically important to the child (such as a parent or sibling)
- Traumatic events overwhelm a child's capacity to cope and elicit feelings of terror, powerlessness, and out-of-control physiological arousal
- Trauma is experienced as a series of traumatic moments each penetrating deep in the child's psyche

Children Vary in Their Response to Traumatic Events

- The impact of a potentially traumatic event *depends* on several factors, including:
 - Age and developmental stage
 - Perception of the danger
 - Relationship to perpetrator
 - Past experiences with trauma
 - Response of caregivers
 - Support system

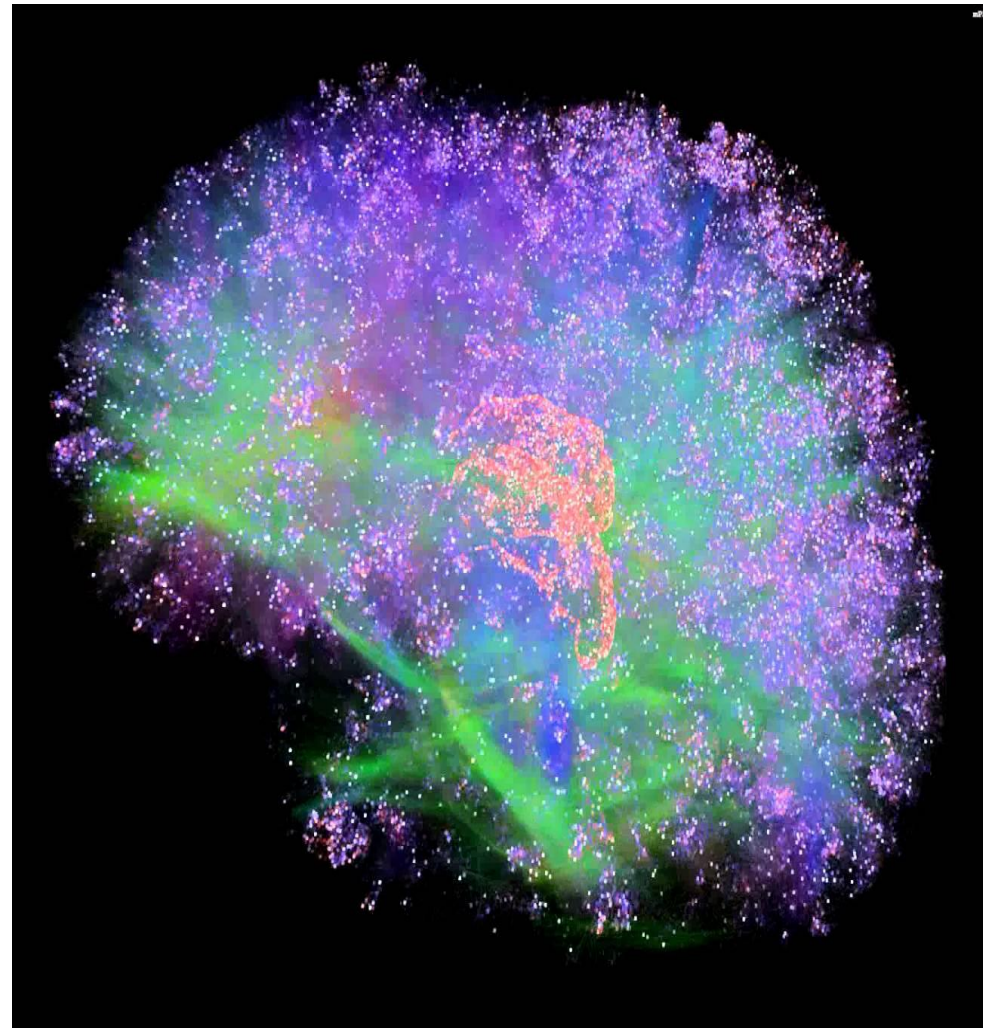
Common Effects of a Traumatic Event



- Intrusive Symptoms
- Negative Thoughts /Mood
- Avoidance
- Arousal/Reactivity

Common Effects of Chronic Trauma

- Mood Regulation
- Behavioral Control
- Cognition
- Self-Concept
- Attachment
- Biology
- Dissociation



- Chronic Stress Experiences
 - Sustained, intense stress
- Constant Fight or Flight
 - Changes to Brain Architecture
 - Roads become highways
 - No Road Closures



Behavioral Responses to Trauma

- Behaviors to Cope
 - Normal responses to abnormal context
 - Effective in short run
 - Maladaptive in the long run (heart disease, HIV, STDs, ↑risk)
- Examples:
 - Running away/AWOL
 - Aggression
 - Withdrawal
 - Yelling
 - Substance Use
 - Lower grades
 - Poor hygiene
 - Seeking control

Impact of Working with Victims of Trauma



Compassion Fatigue

A gradual lessening of compassion over time, common in people who work directly with trauma survivors



Vicarious Trauma

An internal transformation that occurs within trauma workers resulting from their empathic engagement with trauma survivors



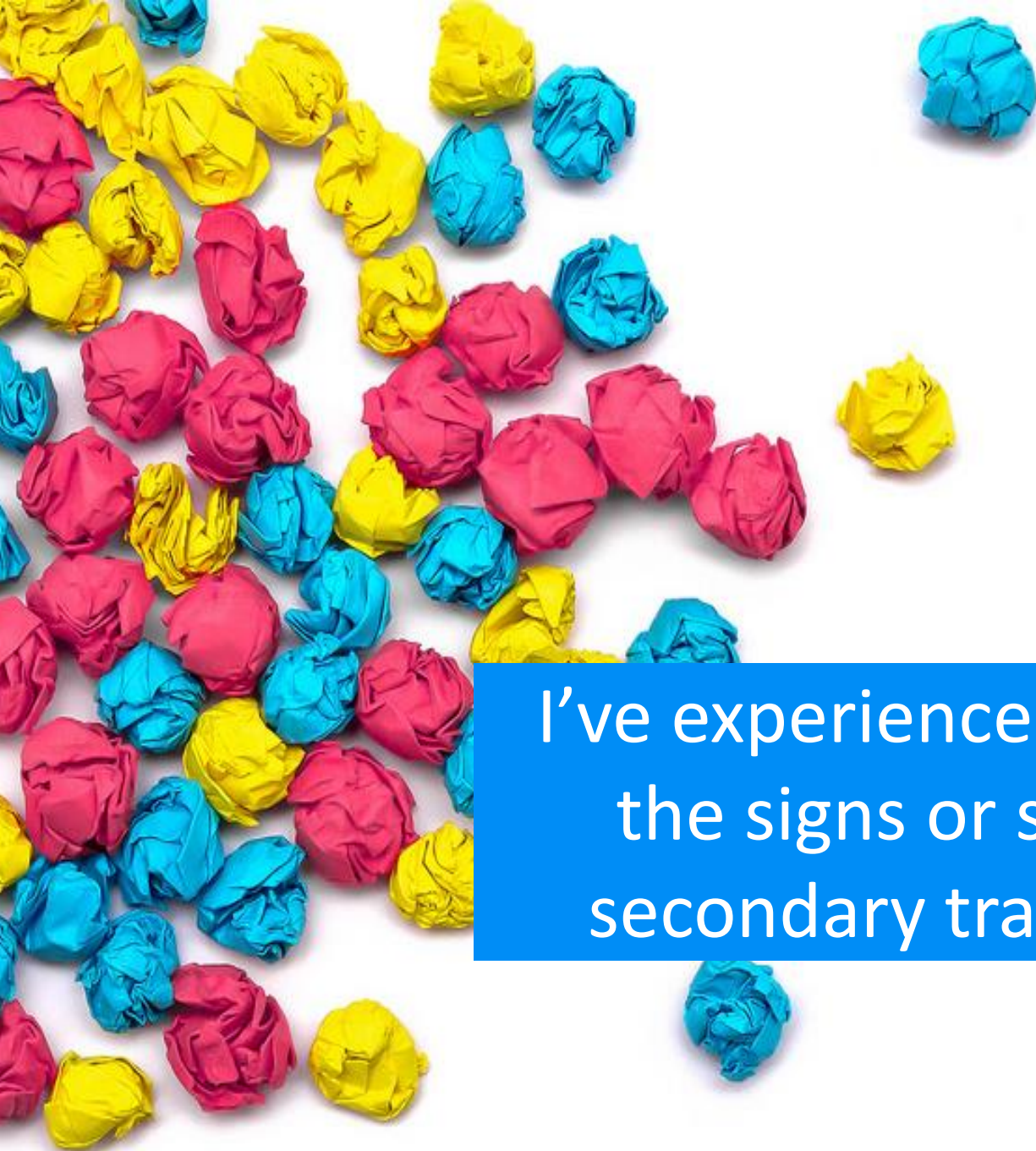
Secondary Traumatic Stress

The stress of helping or wanting to help a person who has been traumatized



STS Signs and Symptoms

- Avoidance (including of certain clients)
- Preoccupation with clients/client stories
- Intrusive thoughts/nightmares/flashbacks
- Arousal symptoms
- Thoughts of violence/revenge
- Feeling estranged/isolated/having no one to talk to
- Feeling trapped, “infected” by trauma, hopeless, inadequate, depressed
- Having difficulty separating work from personal life



I've experience at least one of
the signs or symptoms of
secondary traumatic stress

Posttraumatic Growth

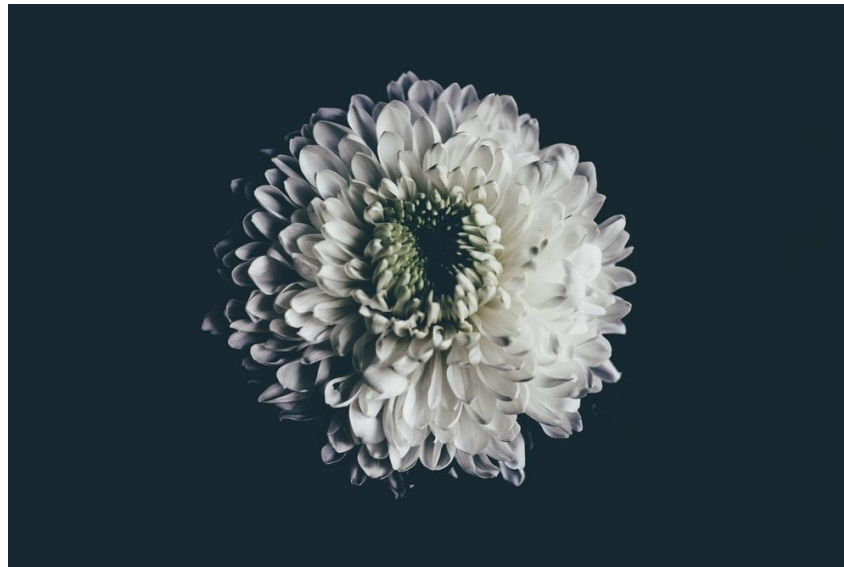
Tedeschi, & Calhoun (2004)

Vicarious Posttraumatic Growth

Arnold, Calhoun, Tedeschi, & Cann (2005)

Compassion Satisfaction

Stamm (2002)



STS Core Competencies for Supervisors (NCTSN)

1. Knowing the signs, symptoms and risk factors for STS and its impact on employees
2. Knowing how to assess and monitor one's own STS
3. Knowing how to encourage employees to share the emotional experience of doing trauma work
4. Skills to assist the supervisee in emotion regulation after difficult encounters
5. Ability to model and coach supervisee in using a trauma lens to guide case conceptualization and service delivery
6. Knowledge of resiliency factors for supervisee
7. Ability to use appropriate self-disclosure in supervisory sessions

Reflective Supervision*

- Regular collaborative reflection between a service provider and supervisor that builds on the supervisee's use of their thoughts, feelings and values within a service encounter.
- Reflective supervision complements the goals and practices of child welfare.
- *Adapted from Zero to Three

Reflection

Reflection means stepping back from the immediate, intense experience of hands-on work and taking the time to wonder what the experience really means.

What does it tell us about the family? About ourselves?

Reflection

Reflection in a supervisory relationship requires a foundation of honesty and trust.

The goal is to create an environment in which people do their best thinking—one characterized by safety, calmness, and support.

Reflection

Meet with supervisors on a regular basis, providing material (like notes from visits with families, videos, verbal reports, etc.) that will help stimulate a dialogue about the work.

Explore the range of emotions (positive and negative) related to the families and issues the supervisee is managing and identify next steps.

Reflection

Reflective supervision is not therapy.

It is focused on experiences, thoughts, and feelings directly connected with the work.

Reflective supervision is characterized by active listening and thoughtful questioning by both parties.

Working through complex emotions in a “safe place” allows the supervisee to manage the stress they experience on the job.

Collaborative

Collaborative supervisory relationships are characterized by a clear understanding of the reciprocal expectations of each partner.

This “contract” is jointly developed and agreed upon by the supervisor and supervisee.

Regularity

Supervision should take place on a reliable schedule, and sufficient time must be allocated to its practice.

This time, while precious and hard to come by, should be protected from cancellation, rescheduling, or procrastination.

Engaging with Emotions



Taking Care of Ourselves

- Intentionality of Awareness - What am I feeling?
- Attend & Allow – Pay attention to the feeling as it arises, intensifies & fades
- Non-Reactivity – Allow the natural course of an emotion to take place without fighting it.

Trauma Informed Supervision





Trauma-Informed Supervision

What's so special?

- ✓ Sharing of emotions and feelings about the work we do
- ✓ Thinking about one's own process
- ✓ Setting an expectation that this happens every supervision session

Reflective Prompts Handout

Compassion Satisfaction Prompts

- Tell me about your successes this month?
- In which ways can you give yourself credit for the successes?
- What did you do or say that helped lead to changes?
- What makes you feel proud or successful in your role?

What Can You Do During the Day?

- Cognitive Breathing
- 5 min movement/hour
- Full lunch hour
- Hot walk and talk
- Mindful breathing before entering into a room
- Noticing signal to be mindful and present
- Quick check-in with self before beginning documentation
- Two feet/one breath
- 5 minute end-of-workday check-out

www.chadwickcenter.com/acts

(858) 966-4011 chadwickcenter@rchsd.org

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TIC Resources

The ACTS project has consolidated what we know about TIC from the existing empirical literature, and created a framework to guide trauma-informed change approaches.

The resources listed within these page are not meant to be a comprehensive list of all available resources, but rather, current, evidence-informed, and trauma focused resources geared towards child-welfare and mental-health professionals at all levels. Resources and information about TIC is continuously evolving, and we anticipate this resource page will evolve and expand over time.

Resources



What About You? A workbook for Those Who Work with Others



Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others



Tools To Reduce Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Trauma & Compassion Fatigue



Thank
You

Chadwick Center at Rady Children's Hospital

Al Kilen-Harvey, LCSW

Lead Trainer, ACTS

akillen-harvey@rchsd.org

Melissa Bernstein, PhD

Implementation Specialist, ACTS

mbernstein1@rchsd.org

Brent Crandal, PhD

Project Co-Director, ACTS

bcrandal@rchsd.org

@drcrandal