



SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

Stress In **ACTION**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT **STS** IS AND HOW IT MAY **IMPACT** YOU

Because you are a vital part of the Duke Community and we are all in this together.



Know the Terms

It is important to keep in mind the definition of the terms to help you identify what you are feeling and its impact on you (see page 2).



Label & Feeling

Acknowledge and **FEEL** your feelings. The feelings may be uncomfortable, but doing this will help you move through the situation/event.



Monitor

Monitor your feelings. Although this does not have to include writing them down, you can if it is a helpful strategy for you.



Coping Strategies

Implement healthy strategies to help you decrease stress. Practice strategies that help you cope and share those with others.

Ask for help!

The only wrong answer is NOT asking for help. We have resources and people available to help you. We are all in this together and must support one another.

Definitions

Secondary Traumatic Stress refers to the presence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to traumatic material.

Compassion Fatigue refers to a term developed by Charles Figley, founder of the Tulane Traumatology Institute, as a less stigmatizing way to describe secondary traumatic stress, the terms are used interchangeably.

Vicarious Trauma refers to a theoretical term that focuses less on trauma symptoms and more on the covert cognitive changes that occur following cumulative exposure to another person's traumatic material. The primary symptoms of vicarious trauma are disturbances in the professional's cognitive frame of reference in the areas of trust, safety, control, esteem and intimacy.

Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. While it is also work-related, burnout develops as a result of general occupational stress; the term is not used to describe the effects of indirect trauma exposure specially.



Coping Strategy Suggestions

- Exercise (walk, run, bike, hike, dance, weight lifting, yoga)
- Engage with the arts (music, dance, painting, sculpting, drawing, writing)
- Mindfulness (meditate, present-focused)
- Spend time with family and colleagues
- Connect with formalized mental health supports (like [Duke's Personal Assistance Service Program-PAS](#), call (919) 416-1727 for an appointment)
- Integrate secondary traumatic stress and self-care check-in's as part of employee supervision
- Join virtual listening circles
- Complete the [Professional Quality of Life \(ProQOL\)](#) assessment
- Practice spiritual beliefs
- Practice good nutritional habits (eating and hydration)
- Practice good sleep habits

