

# Caring Safely Module 7-3

## Organizational Health Trauma Informed Employee Wellness

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1

## In This Module

- Trauma informed practice and compassion fatigue
- ACEs in helping professionals
- The impact of chronic stress
- Stress and organizational health
- Workplace stressors
- Resiliency Skills
- Role of leadership

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2

# Trauma Informed Practice and Compassion Fatigue

We are recognizing the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

We may be seeing ACEs happening in the children we are helping.

We may be seeing the impact of ACEs in the adults we are helping.

We are aware of how common childhood trauma is and we are screening for it so we are more exposed to trauma.

The moral distress that can lead to stress

# ACEs in Helping Professionals

People in helping professions tend to have higher rates of ACEs. Often the hardship endured in childhood is the reason someone goes into a helping field.

Now we have people whose stress response is more sensitive (due to brain development during childhood) being exposed to trauma (direct or indirect) on a regular basis as part of their work. Threat (real or perceived) = Stress Response.

# The Impact of Chronic Stress

- Inflammation across issues and organ systems with widespread outcomes
- Sleep difficulties
- Headaches, joint/muscle pain, impaired immune system
- Impacts cardiovascular system
- More GI problems – colitis, IBS
- Risk of cancer increases
- Impacts arthritis
- Metabolic syndrome

# Workplace Stressors

- Stress response isn't only triggered by perceived threats or exposure to trauma.
- Workplace stressors:
  - Changes in leadership/management/supervisors
  - Absence in leadership/management/supervisors
  - Lack of (or poor) infrastructure (physical environment, technology)
  - Lack of clarity around organizational mandates, job roles, paths of communication.
  - Lack of support for self-care, sick time, modified hours
  - Policies or procedures that require high and potentially unsafe workloads (number of clients per day, poor rations for teachers to students, nurses to patients)
  - Workplace bullying

# Resiliency Skills

Caring Safely skills are resiliency skills to address the impact of ACEs. Not just the skills but the personal growth to use the skills.

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats and other significant or chronic sources of stress.

It is the ability to overcome and, in some cases, benefit from challenging experiences.

- **Re-sil-i-ence**

- ri'zilyəns/

- *Noun*

1. The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

- "nylon is excellent in wearability and resilience"

# Role of Leadership

- Leadership can play a significant role in employee wellness
- Leaders may also be under pressure and stress with demands from people above them and below them within the organization
- Required to meet the mandates of various governments and funding agencies that can change based on political climate
- It can be “lonely at the top” – what type of support do leaders need?
- Because of their position, their actions and comments may be experienced in greater intensity by employees
- Not all leaders will be directing the change for practices that promote compassion satisfaction and prevent compassion fatigue

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