

# Caring Safely®

Supporting Growth and Resilience  
The Concepts

Charlene Richard B.S.W., M.S.W., RSW  
Compassion Fatigue Specialist

## Sustainable Caring

- In addition to reducing the potential harms that come from providing compassionate care, you can also learn to increase the potential benefits.
- Not only do you bear witness and empathize with the pain and suffering, you also get to see and be a part of significant human resilience and growth.
- Because you care for and help people through difficult times, you see the intimate details of how humans cope with and grow from trauma and adversity.
- This inside view is something that can have a very positive impact, especially when you use strategies to enhance these experiences, which is what this module will focus on.

# Post Traumatic Growth

- Post traumatic growth has been described as positive psychological changes that people experience after they struggle from a traumatic or extremely challenging circumstance. (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001)
- When someone survives a traumatic event it's common to take a personal inventory of their life and to re-evaluate what is important. This can lead to new behaviors, new ways of relating to people and new priorities, all contributing to personal growth.
- A great book with recent research on post traumatic growth is *Upside: The new science of post traumatic growth* by Jim Rendon
- Post-traumatic growth is more common than post-traumatic stress disorder. Rendon, J. (2015)

# Post Traumatic Growth Inventory

- A post traumatic growth inventory is available for those who are curious to see what is scaled. This scale was created for people who have experienced a direct trauma themselves.
- Five areas of growth:
  1. Relationship to others
  2. New life possibilities
  3. Personal strength growth
  4. Spiritual change
  5. Appreciation for life

*Handout*

## Vicarious Post Traumatic Growth

- People who help other people cope with, and recover from, trauma can also experience growth as a result of exposure to that trauma.
- Research shows helping professional can experience greater psychological and cognitive development, emotional adjustment and life awareness from working with those who have experienced trauma.
- Changes in:
  - self-perception
  - interpersonal relationships
  - life philosophy

Barrington, A. and Shakespeare-Finch, J. (2013)

## Vicarious Post Traumatic Growth

- **Self-Perception:** The noticed the had become more open-minded, more tolerate, more flexible and patient. They said they had more acceptance and were less likely to be bothered by the small stuff or get “worked up”.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Positive shifts in relationships - they noticed a deeper appreciation for family and friends and more meaningful relationships.
- **Philosophy of life:** The workers noticed that they had a new perspective on life and a view of how the world works. Some felt that compared to their clients, they were grateful for not having as many hardships. more gratitude for what they had in their day to day lives such as warm homes, plenty to eat, safety, security and positive relationship. They had less focus on material possessions.

Barrington, A. and Shakespeare-Finch, J. (2013)

## Peer Accounts Vicarious Post Traumatic Growth

- *“Your ideas about what the world is like just develops and it kind of crumbles and it grows and it blooms in all these weird ways. My understanding of our earth and people has just, you know, it just grows everyday like with every phone call, with every interaction like it’s constantly growing and the understanding it constantly getting bigger.”*
- *“I think we learn everyday something new and it’s for us! What we learn is making us bigger, not bigger [i.e. physically bigger], but our minds or our views are broadened.”*
- *“I used to be really strict and I used to be a right or wrong person, and this place has changed me 100% in that way. I try to avoid saying right or wrong, even to say that, you know, because now, I don’t believe there is a right or wrong.”*

Barrington, A. and Shakespeare-Finch, J. (2013)

## Peer Accounts Vicarious Post Traumatic Growth

- *“Its changed the values that you want, to live more simply, even if that was maybe my philosophy always [this work] probably enhances that more.”*
- *“I might finish a session and I’ll just send a message home to my partner about how much I care about him and for being in my life because of something that, you know, I’ve talked about with a client. “*
- *“I appreciate everything and everybody a lot more. I appreciate things like having my family, you know, having my children here, my mother here, and just all the opportunities that we have, the freedom that we have. We have the freedom to do anything, to go anywhere.”*

Barrington, A. and Shakespeare-Finch, J. (2013)

# Resilience

- Caring Safely strategies help people develop skills that support the development of individual resilience.
- According to the American Psychological Association, “Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences” (American Psychological Association, 2018)
- It is the ability to overcome and, in some cases, benefit from challenging experiences.
- Improving resilience within a trauma-informed framework is also shown to help people overcome the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences. (Leitch, 2017)

# Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

- The Brief Resilience Scale measures a person’s ability to bounce back and recover from stress.
- Option to use it as another scale to measure how you are doing now and then use over time to see if your level of resilience changes.

**Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)**

Please respond to each item by marking one box per row	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 I tend to bounce back quickly after stressful events	1	2	3	4	5
2 I have a hard time making it through stressful events	5	4	3	2	1
3 It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event	1	2	3	4	5
4 It is hard for me to bounce back when something bad happens	5	4	3	2	1
5 I usually come through difficult times with little trouble	1	2	3	4	5
6 I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life	5	4	3	2	1

Scoring: Add the responses varying from 1-5 for all six items giving a range from 6-30.  
Divide the total sum by the total number of questions answered.

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 6 = Score of \_\_\_\_\_

According to the authors of the BRS, scores can be interpreted as follows:

Low resilience: 1.00-2.99  
Normal resilience: 3.00-4.30  
High resilience: 4.33-5.00

Smith, B. W., Dalen, L., Wiggins, J. S., Pincus, A. L., Ankeny, K., Good, L., & Bernard, J. (2006). The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back. *International journal of behavioral medicine, 13*(2), 191-196.

Smith, B.W., Epstein, E.L., Orsillo, J.A., Christopher, P.A., & Tashky, R.M. (2010). The Foundations of Resilience: What are the critical resources for bouncing back from stress? In Prince-Embury, S., & Sankilainen, J.H. (Eds.), *Resilience in children, adolescents, and adults: Translating research into practice*. The Springer series on human exceptionality (pp. 187-207). New York, NY: Springer.

[www.CaringSafely.org](http://www.CaringSafely.org)

# Vicarious Resilience

- “Vicarious resilience refers to unique, positive effects that transform therapists in response to witnessing trauma survivors' resilience and recovery process.” (Killian et al. 2017)
- Vicarious resilience is correlated with posttraumatic growth and compassion satisfaction. Vicarious resilience is not correlated with compassion fatigue as compassion fatigue is not the opposite of compassion fatigue or burnout. (Killian et al. 2017)
- This is why it's important to focus on both the reduction of compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout as well as increasing posttraumatic growth and resilience.

# Vicarious Resilience Scale (VRS)

- Total score overall and total score in each sub scale
  1. Changes in life goals and perspectives
  2. Client-inspired hope
  3. Increased self-awareness and self-care practices
  4. Increased capacity for resourcefulness
  5. Increased recognition of clients' spirituality as a therapeutic resource
  6. Consciousness about power and privilege relative to clients' social location
  7. Increased capacity for remaining present while listening to trauma narratives
- Can use for personal score now and overtime (Killian et al. 2017)

## *Handout*

# Connecting the Concepts

- Personalize and integrate the concepts of:
  - Post traumatic growth
  - Vicarious post traumatic growth
  - Resilience
  - Vicarious resilience

*Handout*