Team-based Strategies to Reduce Trauma Response and Burnout

Michael Cull, PhD, MSN
Center for Innovation in Population Health
College of Public Health, University of Kentucky
Secondary Trauma and Burnout

• Secondary Traumatic Stress/Vicarious Trauma (STS/VT): STS is a secondary trauma which results from indirect exposure to trauma. Defined by Dr. Charles Figley, Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder is “the natural consequent behaviors resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other. It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person” (Figley, 1995).

• Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy. (WHO, 2019)
Shoji, et. al. (2015) What Comes First, Job Burnout or Secondary Traumatic Stress? Findings from Two Longitudinal Studies from the U.S. and Poland
“pre-COVID burnout statistics that showed up to 54% of nurses and physicians” Dr. Vivek Murphy, Surgeon General
Over 50% of child welfare professionals reported relatively high levels of secondary traumatic stress. (Rienkes, 2020)
29.6% of child welfare professionals reported severe levels of secondary traumatic stress.

(Rienkes, 2020)
62% of child protective caseworkers exhibited signs of emotional exhaustion.

(Anderson, 2000)
Resilience as a property of the system...
Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive
Brief increases in heart rate.
Mild elevations in stress hormone levels

Tolerable
Serious, temporary stress responses,
Buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic
Prolonged activation of stress response systems
In the absence of protective relationships.

Harvard Center of the Developing Child
The impact of social support, unit cohesion, and trait resilience on PTSD in treatment-seeking military personnel with PTSD: The role of posttraumatic cognitions

Yinyin Zang a,*, Thea Gallagher a, Carmen P. McLean a, Hallie S. Tannahill a, Jeffrey S. Yarvis b, Edna B. Foa a, the STRONG STAR Consortium

a Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
b Headquarters, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, Fort Hood, TX, USA

1. Introduction

The prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in active-duty military personnel who have deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) is estimated to be between 5% and 17% (Coyne et al., 2010; Hope et al., 2014; Maickel et al., 2007; Schell et al., 2011). Prior research examining predictors of PTSD has identified several psychological factors.
Some Early Data Tells Us...

**MINDFUL ORGANIZING**
Measures teamwork and team resilience – how teams monitor, plan, innovate, learn, and support one another

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**
The shared belief team members are accepted, respected, supported, and able disclose a concern or mistake

Increasing **psychological safety**
(Leake et al., 2017; NPCS data, 2021; Vogus et al., 2016)

Increasing **psychological safety**
(NPCS data, 2021; Vogus et al., 2016)

Increasing **mindful organizing**
(Epstein et al., 2020; NPCS data, 2021)
Conclusions The authors found differences in SAQ dimensions at the country, hospital and unit level. The general emphasis placed on teamwork and safety climate in quality and safety efforts appear to be highlighting dimensions that vary more at the unit level than the hospital level. They suggest that patient safety improvement interventions target unit level changes, and they support the emphasis being placed on teamwork and safety climate, as these vary significantly at the unit level across countries.
Team Health is Contagious!

Being DISCONNECTED is a significant health risk
How might we create teams-based strategies?

Mindful Organizing

Psychological Safety

Intentional Design
Psychological Safety

What it is:

• A shared belief that comes from shared experiences.
• A state of feeling accepted, supported, respected, and free to take interpersonal risks.
• A place where mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn – not a time to blame and punish.

What it is NOT:

• Free from accountability.
• A place where people always feel comfortable.
Psychological Safety - Discomfort and Safety

- How People Go Nowhere
- How People Grow and Learn
- How People Get Hurt
- What People Avoid

Edmonson, 2015
The “what ifs” that get in the way

What if I’m wrong?
What if I look incompetent?
What if I’m seen as negative?
What if I sound disruptive?
What if they get angry?
What if they don’t like me?

Think of a time when you didn’t feel psychologically safe — put in the chat one fear you had that got in the way.
Team-based Strategies for Building Habit

Plan Forward
➢ Huddles and Briefings

Reflect Back
➢ Triggered debriefings

Communicate Effectively
➢ Structured tools, SBAR, Conscious narratives

Test Change
➢ Driver Diagrams and PDSA cycles

Promote Professionalism
➢ Struggling well together, Self-care
Thank You!
michael.cull@uky.edu

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