



Welcome to
Recognizing & Regulating Workplace Distress Through the Window of Capacity


THE TRAINING WILL BEGIN SHORTLY! WHILE YOU'RE WAITING...

Icebreaker Question
 (answer in the chat)
 What is your favorite seasonal drink/treat?

Survey & Certificate of Completion
 Available following the training.
 CEUs available for LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, and LEPs

Connect With Us!  **VISIT [CALTRAIN.ORG](https://caltrain.org) & SCAN TO LEARN MORE** 

1



Hi, We're Caltrain!

Who we are

- The California Training Institute
- Funded by the State of California, Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) to support child abuse prevention through professional development and extended learning opportunities.
- Designed for staff of family strengthening and child abuse prevention organizations in California, including Family Resource Centers, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, community-based organizations, and other child and family serving systems.

What we offer

- Live webinars & small group training
- Virtual, self-paced courses
- Job aids & other resources

This training was made possible with funding from the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed are those of the CEBC/Caltrain and do not necessarily reflect the views of the California Department of Social Services.

2

UPCOMING TRAININGS
mark your calendars!

Visit caltrain.org to view and register for upcoming webinars or workshops

 **November 20** | Trauma-Informed Leadership

 **December 9** | Leading Through Change

 **November 25** | Implementing Treatment Foster Care Oregon – Adolescent (TFCO-A)

 **December 10** | Psychological Safety & Inclusive Workspaces

 **December 2** | The Culture of You, Me, and We

 **December 11** | Advanced Training on Secondary Traumatic Stress & Empathic Strain

3



4



5



6



Speaker SPOTLIGHT



Cambria Walsh, LCSW

Trauma-Informed Consultant & Trainer



- Specializes in trauma-informed care, organizational health, and secondary traumatic stress (STS)
- Founder of Rise and Revitalize, a program supporting sustainable well-being for helping professionals
- Associate with TEND Academy, co-developer of the TEND Organizational Health Roadmap, and creator of the TEND Trauma-Informed Practices Training Series

Rady Children's Health is not responsible for the creation of content and any views expressed in its materials and programming.

7

Recognizing and Regulating Workplace Distress Through the Window of Capacity

Cambria Rose Walsh, LCSW
 Founder of Rise & Revitalize
info@cambriawalshconsulting@gmail.com
www.cambriawalshconsulting.com

8

Learning Objectives

1

Differentiate between secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and moral distress and their signs and symptoms.

2

Identify the individual, organizational, and societal roles in addressing secondary traumatic stress and explain how each level contributes to solutions.

3

Name four techniques to address secondary traumatic stress.

4

Identify two ways that peer support and supervisory support can help mitigate secondary traumatic stress.




9

Poll- What is your Role?

- Senior Leadership
- Front line direct service
- Supervisor
- Trainer
- Support Staff
- Other



10

Rethinking the Empty Cup Metaphor



11

Importance of Tri-Focal Approach

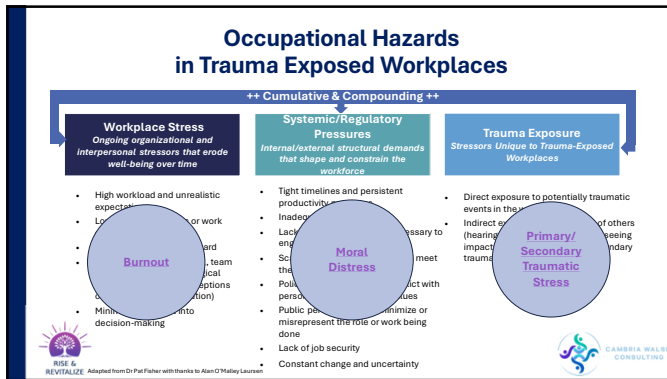
Individual

Organizational

Society



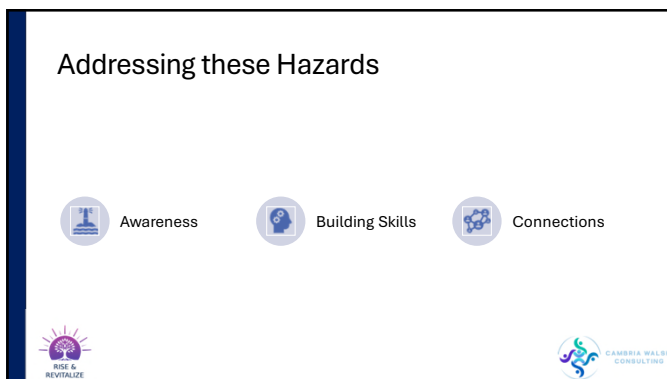
12



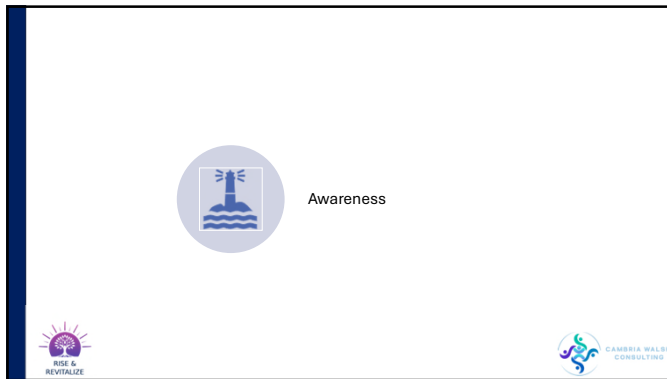
13



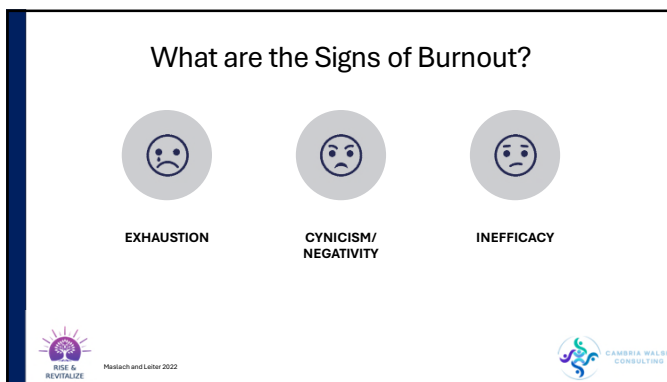
14



15



16



17



18

Signs of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Emotional

Physical

Behavioral

Cognitive

Relational



19

Factors that Impact STS

• Moral Distress
• Burnout

• Type of work
• How STS:
Informed/supportive
Psychological safety

Nature of Exposure

• Frequency
• Type
• Severity

Individual

• Prior trauma history/
• life experiences
• Current trauma/life experiences
• Other mental health/health conditions
• Coping skills

Socio-environmental

• Political climate
• Value of the work/social support
• Racism, discrimination, oppression

Organizational



Adapted from Dr. Ginny Sprang



20

Understanding the Amplification Effects

Maria is a new caseworker at the Early Journeys Center. In her first few months, Maria hears detailed accounts of violence and abuse from her young clients and their parents. Her caseload continues to grow as staff shortages arise from others leaving the agency. Maria learns that several of her clients cannot access other needed services due to long waitlists and insurance barriers. She has also noted that some of her clients are becoming fearful of attending sessions due to their immigration status. She feels powerless and conflicted. She begins to experience intrusive thoughts and occasional nightmares about her clients' situations. She feels emotionally raw and hypervigilant, finding it harder to "switch off" after work. She also doesn't know who to turn to for support as her supervisor recently went out on leave.

Over time, she becomes increasingly fatigued, detached from her clients, and cynical about her role. Even small tasks feel overwhelming. She starts to question her purpose and worries that she isn't doing enough, but she also feels like she can't stretch anymore.



What signs of burnout, moral distress and secondary traumatic stress do you see?
How are they amplifying each other?



21

How Do We Use Awareness to Help?



22

Window of Capacity

HYPER-AROUSSED
Fight or Flight response

- Anger / Rage
- Aggression
- Overwhelmed
- Outbursts
- Impulsivity
- Rigidity
- Chaotic Responses
- Sleep Disruptions
- Overeating

Optimal Functioning

- Emotionally Regulated
- Calm, Cool, Collected, Connected
- Allows for healthy relationships

HYPO-AROUSSED
Freeze response

- Unavailable
- Shut Down
- Disconnected
- Dissociation
- No Display of Emotion
- Auto-pilot
- Not Present
- Memory Loss



Adapted from Siegel, D.J. (1999). The developing mind: Toward a neurobiology of interpersonal experience. Guilford Press



23

Window of Capacity

HYPER-AROUSSED
Fight or Flight response

Optimal Functioning

HYPO-AROUSSED
Freeze response

Common Challenges that Move Us out of our Window of Capacity

- Trauma Exposure**
 - High doses of indirect exposure
 - Repeated loss or threat of loss
 - High exposure to trauma reminders
- Values Conflicts**
 - Feeling under-resourced
 - Feeling in conflict with organizational or societal mandates
- Barriers**
 - Overwhelm
 - Conflicts with Co-Workers
 - Productivity Requirements



Adapted from Siegel, D.J. (1999). The developing mind: Toward a neurobiology of interpersonal experience. Guilford Press




24



Awareness


- How do you monitor how you are doing?
- What are your “tells” that things are not going well?

 What are 3 signs for yourself that indicate that you are being impacted by your work?






25


Addressing these Hazards



Building Skills






26



Building Skills

- Grounding and Resetting
- Transitions
- Self-Compassion
- Competence
- Managing Trauma Inputs

27



Grounding Skills



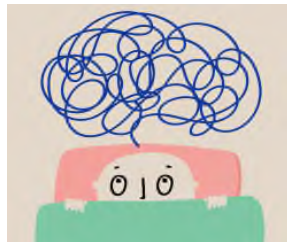
- They can be done quickly and help to reset our nervous systems so that our capacity to handle distress is increased.
- When we can be present we can access our problem-solving capabilities.
- Organizational design needs to allow time to engage in grounding skills.



28

Rumination

- Rumination is repetitive thinking about past events or future concerns.
- It feels like problem-solving, but without a focused plan, it keeps us stuck.
- The antidote? Engage in **task-positive activities**



29




Transitions



When trauma-exposure happens we need to be able to set appropriate boundaries to allow ourselves to transition from one encounter or task to another.




30




What are ways that you transition between tasks or clients at work? How does your organization support or hinder your ability to do so?

31



Self-Compassion





Self-Kindness
– Being gentle and understanding with yourself rather than harshly self-critical when you encounter pain or failure.

Common Humanity
– Recognizing that suffering, failure, and imperfection are part of the shared human experience—not something that isolates you.

Mindfulness
– Holding your thoughts and emotions in balanced awareness, without suppressing or exaggerating them.

(Based on the work of Kristin Neff)

32



Competence

- Intentional Mastery
- Learning Organizations



Where might you need to build competence? Take a moment to think about a challenging encounter at work and what skills you might want to access in the future.




33



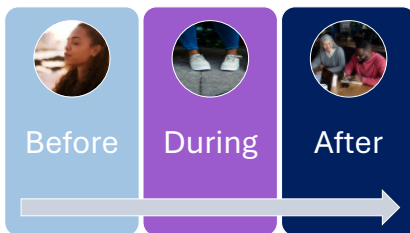
Managing Trauma Inputs

- What are the trauma inputs you have at work?
- What do these look like outside of work?



34

Planning for the Trauma Exposure



35

How Can We Handle the Trauma Exposure?




Let's think about some of the ways that we prepare, how we stay present and what we do after a difficult encounter.



- What do you do before or on an ongoing basis to prepare?
- What do you do during the difficult encounter?
- What do you do afterwards?




36



Connections






37




Connections

- Support systems at work and outside of work are both critical.
 - We need people who understand our work that we can talk to about it
 - We need people who remind us that there is more to life than what we are faced with all day at work
- People who have positive relationships at work feel more supported and are able to reach out for help when needed







38





Low Impact Processing

- Self Awareness
- Fair Warning
- Consent
- Limited Disclosure






39






Support Systems

- Who are the people in your life that bring you joy?
- Who are the people that are there when you have a tough day?
- Who are the people that check-in with you?



Where do you feel your support is strong? What is one area you'd like to *grow*?

40

What Does an STS –Informed Organization Look Like?

Normalize Conversations

Open space to talk about emotional impact without stigma

Model Healthy Boundaries

Take breaks, use PTO, and reset openly

Build Peer Support

Foster connection through check-ins, circles, and shared rituals

Advocate for Systemic Change

Push for trauma-informed policies, supervision and manageable workloads

Educate and Empower



Share tools and lead brief trainings

Reconnect to Purpose

Highlight meaning, impact, and hope in the work

Center Equity and Justice

Ensure solutions are inclusive and responsive to those most affected


41



What is Your Organization Doing?

STSI-OA <https://ctac.uky.edu/stsi-oa>

- 1)Promotion of STS Resilience BuildingActivities
- 2)Promotion of a Sense of Safety
- 3)STS Informed Nature of Organizational Policies
- 4)STS-Informed Nature of the Practices of Leaders
- 5)STS –Informed Nature of Other Organizational Practices
- 6)Evaluation/Monitoring of STS informed Policies/Practices

Sprang, Ross, Blackshear, Miller, Vrabie, Ham, Henry, Caringi et al., 2014









42

Rise & Revitalize

Rise & Revitalize is a transformative program designed for professionals working in high-stress, high-impact environments. Through practical tools, reflective exercises, and evidence-informed strategies, you'll learn to manage burnout, moral distress, and secondary traumatic stress while fostering well-being and being able to continue to do meaningful work.

To Learn More:  <https://riseandrevitalize.systeme.io/information>

Sign up for a Free Monthly Newsletter:  <https://riseandrevitalize.systeme.io/newsletter>


 

www.cambriawalshconsulting.com

43

Closing

- What is one thing you will try in this next week?

44

?

Any Questions?

For more information: info@cambriawalshconsulting.com

To Learn More:  <https://riseandrevitalize.systeme.io/information>

Sign up for a Free Monthly Newsletter:  <https://riseandrevitalize.systeme.io/newsletter>

www.cambriawalshconsulting.com

45

Thanks for joining us!

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Survey and certificate in the chat now
 - LCSWs, LPCCs, LMFTs, and LEPs – complete additional survey section to receive CEUs
- Follow-up email with resources within two days
- Watch your inbox for the next issue of *CalTrin Connect*

Stay Connected for More Free Training & Resources!

VISIT CALTRIN.ORG & SCAN TO LEARN MORE

FOLLOW US! AND CHECK OUT TRAINING REPLAYS ON YOUTUBE!

in f i y

46

THE FUTURE IS NOW. NAVIGATING CHALLENGES. SHAPING TOMORROW

41st Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment

JAN 24-29, 2026

Town and Country San Diego
980 Hotel Circle North
San Diego, CA 92108

Register Here

Rady Children's • Chaudrick Center for Children & Families

47
