Understanding Secondary Traumatic Stress for Parent Group Leaders

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Sue Badeau

Adoptive parent, author, consultant

Housekeeping

- This webinar will be 90 minutes long and will include time for questions via the online chat function.

- We will record this webinar. We will share the recording with you and post it on professionals.adoptuskids.org.

- Your line will be muted throughout the webinar.

- The webinar will include poll questions and opportunities for you to share information via the chat function, including if you are having technical difficulties.

- Please evaluate the session after the webinar. You will receive an email from AdoptUSKids.

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About AdoptUSKids

Our mission:

- Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system

- Assist states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop, and support foster and adoptive families

Goals for this webinar

- Build on foundational concepts, discuss a deeper understanding and awareness of the signs of secondary traumatic stress

- Introduce a tool—the ProQol—that can help measure and manage secondary traumatic stress

- Provide knowledge and skills for participants to balance their own stress and self-care needs with the needs of their support groups

- Introduce the reflective supervision model and demonstrate how it can be adapted to deepen supportive connections for group leaders, co-facilitators, and their support group members

Poll 1

Circle one

Something I am thankful for today
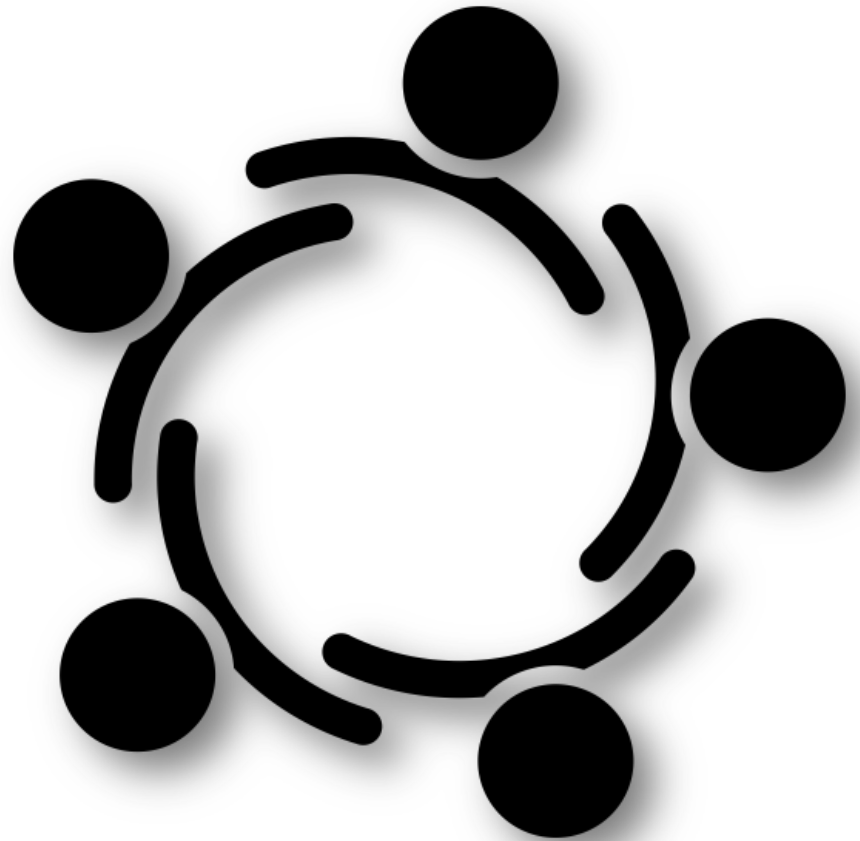
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ABCs of secondary trauma, self-care and reflective supervision

A = Awareness

B = Balance

C = Connection

A is for awareness

- Definitions
- Warning signs
  - Mine
  - Individual
  - Group
- What helps in general?
- What helps me, my group?
- What is the goal?

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Secondary trauma

Frequent or continuous exposure to other people's trauma

"It's not the 1 you can't forget, it's the 100 you can't even remember."

–Brandi Lea

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Related terms

Challenges

- Burnout
- Vicarious trauma
- Compassion fatigue
- Secondary traumatic stress (STS)

Strengths

- Empathy
- Compassion satisfaction
- Resilience and vicarious resilience
- Post-traumatic resilience

Definition of resilience

The ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances by drawing upon all of one's resources: biological, psychological, and environmental

Polls 2-4

Personal impact of STS

STS affects us across life domains:
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Spiritual
- Interpersonal
- Physical

Professional impact of STS

STS impacts professional functioning on many levels:

- Performance of tasks

- Morale

- Interpersonal

- Behavioral

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What circumstances can trigger a trauma or STS response?

Situational

- Specific places
- Time of day, week, year
- Transitional times
- Certain tasks, activities, events
- Disorder or disruption to routine
- Presence or absence of specific person or people

Sensory

- Certain sounds, unusual quiet or noise
- Specific sights, colors, visual stimuli
- Scents, odors, foods
- Hunger, exhaustion
- Being touched

Adult behaviors linked to trauma triggers

Trauma response	Behaviors
Fight	Visceral recoiling, trying to dominate/control, not completing tasks, arguing
Flight	"Checking out," absences, lying, hyperbole, dozing off
Freeze	Crying, somatic symptoms, isolating, shutting down, unable/unwilling to talk

Measuring CS and CF: The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

- The ProQOL is free: for more information see www.proqol.org

- A 30-item self-report measure of the positive and negative aspects of caring

- The ProQOL measures compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue

- Compassion fatigue has two subscales
  - Burnout
  - Secondary trauma

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Measuring CS and CF: The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

- The ProQOL is the most widely used measure of the positive and negative aspects of helping in the world.

- The ProQOL has proven to be a valid measure of compassion satisfaction and fatigue.

- It has been used for over 15 years.

- The measure was developed with data from over 3,000 people.

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# Measuring CS and CF: The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

- Helps understand the positive and negative aspects of helping

- Not a "psychological test"

- Not a "medical test"

- Can be viewed as a screening for stress-related health problems

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ProQOL

- Review survey
- Using this in a group setting

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Awareness and the functional use of assessments

- Where am I at this particular point in time?

- Where am I over time?

- What are the signs that something is changing in the wrong direction?

- What steps can I take to facilitate change in the right direction?
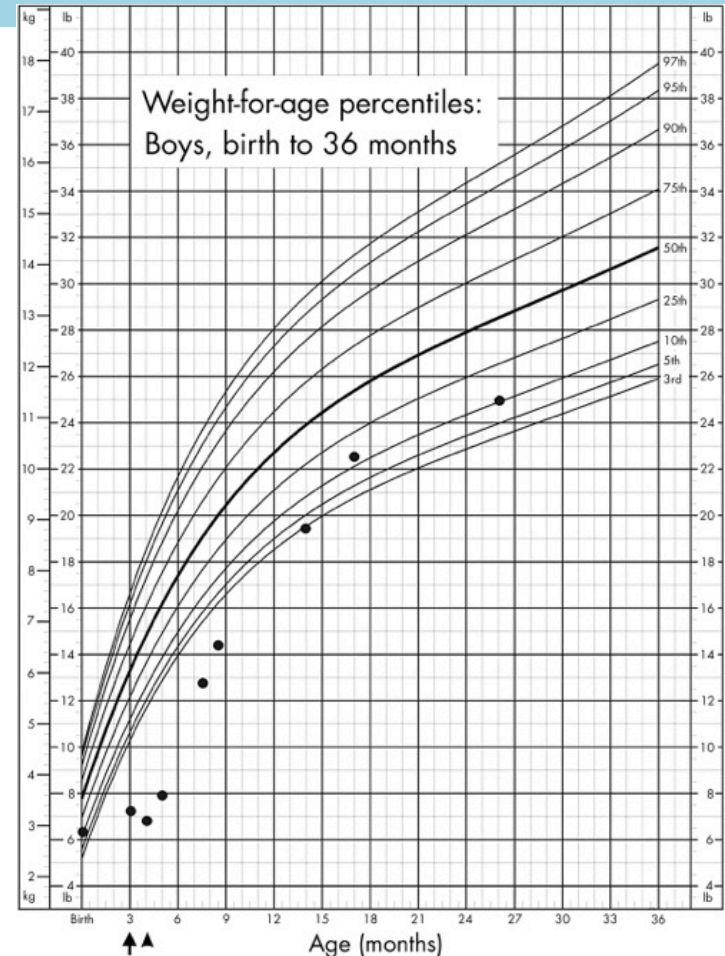
Weight-for-age percentiles: Boys, birth to 36 months

ABCs of secondary trauma, self-care, and reflective supervision

A = Awareness

B = Balance

C = Connection

B is for balance

- Needs of group vs. needs of individual

- Need to keep moving vs. need to stop and pause

- Need for continuity vs. need for change

Circle two

One of my greatest strengths or talents
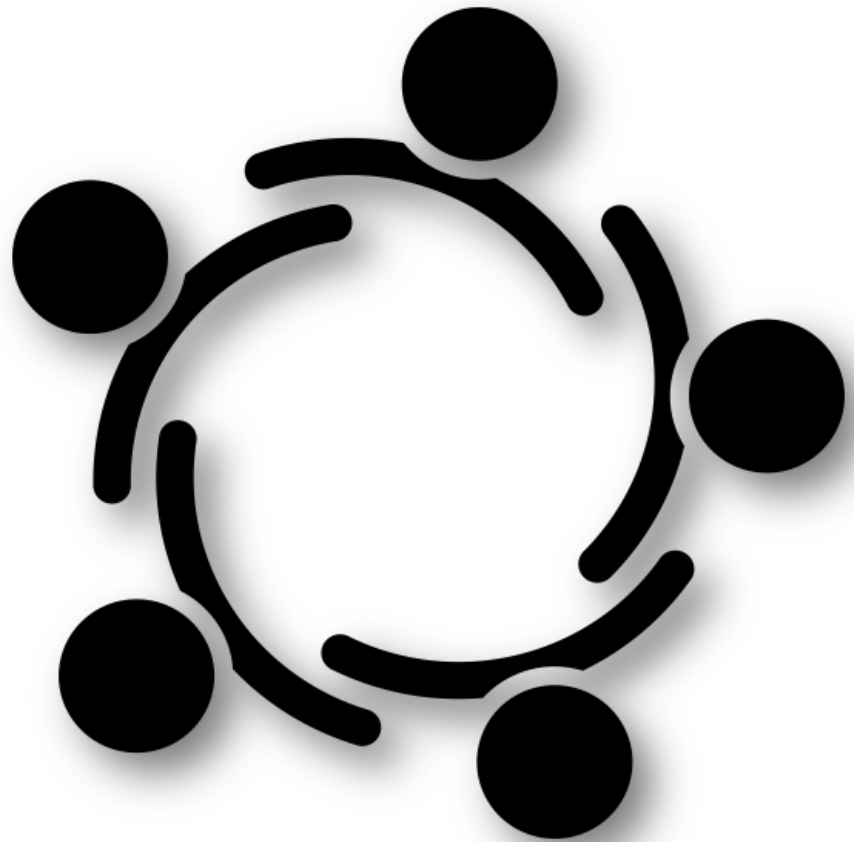
Balance: Tips for individual self-care planning

- Work/life and use of time: daily, weekly/monthly, occasional

- Whole being: mind, body, spirit, emotions, five-senses toolkit

- Time alone vs. time with others

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Balance in the group setting

On a regular basis:

- Structuring and using self-care strategies in meetings
- Shared facilitation/observation roles of leaders

When there is a crisis in the meeting:

- Immediate responses (quick fixes)
- Practice the pause – take time to reflect
- Use the tools described in next few slides
- Recognize when it is time to move on

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Brainstorm case examples

- A long time leader has moved away and the group is floundering during the new or transitional leadership plan.

- A member of the group made cutting remarks about another member's race, gender, or sexuality and the group is splitting into factions, taking sides.

- A caregiver who is a regular member of the group has been physically harmed by a teenage foster or adoptive child in the home and the group is reeling from the grief and loss.

A useful tool

What?

So what?

Now what?

Teach and practice

Questions to guide group debrief

- What are my thoughts and beliefs about what happened?

- What are my feelings about what happened?

- What did I notice about my behaviors or the behaviors I wanted to do?

- What actions or words from others helped me or the group through this?

- Move to critical success analysis.

Critical success analysis exercise

1. Group identifies a shared experience of success.

2. Build a timeline – start and end dates.

3. On post-it notes, identify each person, activity, interaction, idea, etc., that contributed to the success.

4. Arrange post-it notes along the timeline.

5. Use questions to analyze the success.

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Critical success analysis exercise

- How did each item contribute to the overall successful outcome?

- What assumptions did we make in our work toward this success? They might be beliefs we had or actions we took that we were unaware of at the time but that made a difference.

- Are there lessons we can take from these items? Can we replicate this success? How?

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ABCs of secondary trauma, self-care, and reflective supervision

A = Awareness

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C is for connection

- Connect
- Seek support
- Use reflective supervision with peers

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Circle three

Someone I can turn to for support

Why reflective supervision for support group leaders?

- Reduces impact of secondary or vicarious trauma

- Reduces leadership turnover

- Improves group identity and culture

- Contributes to overall leadership development

- Supports desired group outcomes (safety, connection, growth for group members)

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What is reflective supervision?

Reflective supervision is "the discipline of **regularly "stepping back”** to consider the **meaning** of what has transpired in **relationships** and to **examine one's professional and personal responses** to these interactions for the **purpose** of determining **future actions.”**

Minnesota Family Home Visiting, 2009

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Three building blocks
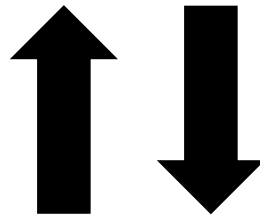
Reflection

Collaboration

Regularity

First block: Reflection

- Mirroring

- Being present

- Active listening

- Demonstrating empathy

- Support self-care for others

Practice showing empathy
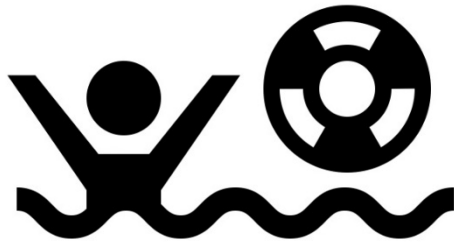
Created by Miguel C Balandrano
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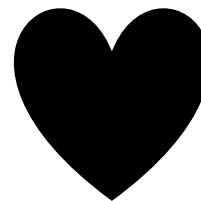
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Second block: Collaborative problem solving

- Issues/challenges defined
- Goals/desired outcomes discussed
- Possible solutions developed collaboratively

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Tools for collaboration

- Brainstorming
- Open-ended questions
- "What if?"
- Role reversal
- Role playing

Don't forget to demonstrate empathy.

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Should I stay or should I go?

- No shame in taking a break

- A good model for participants

- Planned breaks vs. crisis management breaks

- Processing this decision through a reflective process with your own mentor, support person

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Third block: Regularity

- Regular meeting time
- Structure for meetings
- Link new discussion to past discussions

Circle four

Something I am looking forward to this week
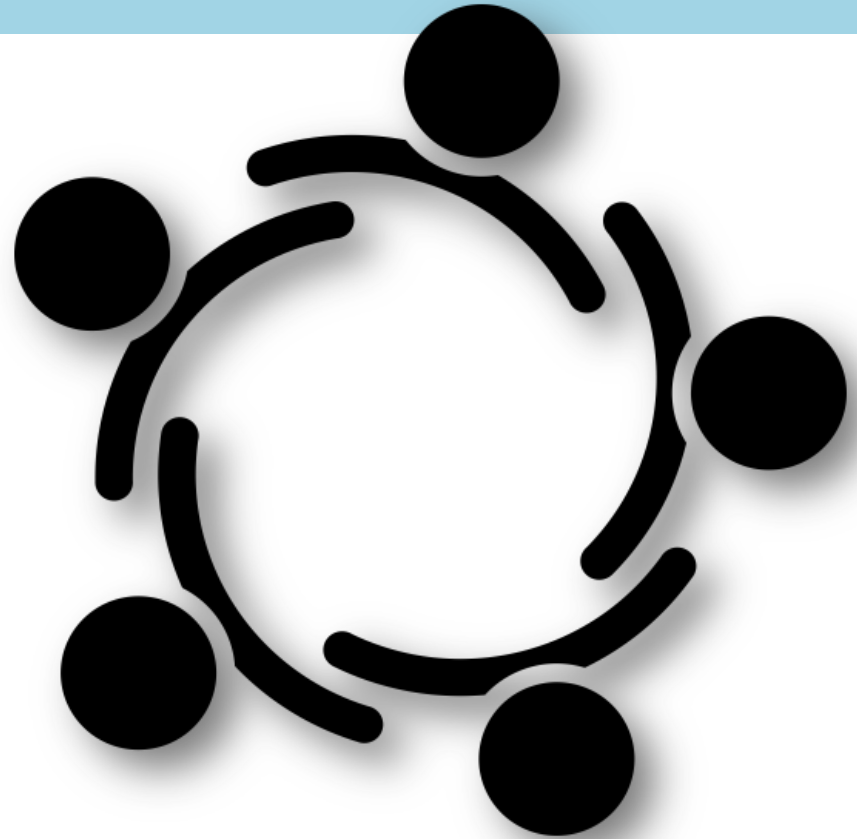
Questions?

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AdoptUSKids resources for parent group leaders

Find tip sheets, discussion guides, and recorded webinars for parent group leaders at
https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/category/support-families/parent-groups/

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How AdoptUSKids can help

- Tailored capacity building services

- Family support peer group for administrators or their designees

- Free resources on the [AdoptUSKids website](#)

Stay informed about upcoming events and publications adoptuskids.org/newsletter-sign-up.

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Contact information

Britt Cloudsdale

AdoptUSKids Family Support Program Manager

brittcloudsdale@nacac.org

651-644-3036 X 116

Contact consultation@adoptuskids.org to inquire about tailored capacity-building services.

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