

Talking Points: How the Agency Is Addressing Vicarious Trauma

Message:

We are implementing agency-wide strategies to strengthen our response to vicarious trauma (VT) because it is an occupational challenge that can have a negative impact on us and the community we serve.

What: Describe Vicarious Trauma

- VT is the exposure to the trauma experiences of others.
- By implementing training, we will increase awareness about VT and its impact.
- We must acknowledge the cumulative stress of responding to calls, victims, and community members every day and over time.
- By addressing VT, we are reaffirming our commitment to professionalism, the health of our employees, and the safety of our community.

Why: Address VT as an Agency

- Acute and/or chronic exposure to violence experienced by others can negatively affect us.
- Employing strategies to address VT will improve morale and increase our collaborative efforts, internally and externally.
- Taking steps to address VT will improve our overall response to those we serve, thereby building and sustaining relationships and community trust.
- Addressing VT will enhance our employees' physical and emotional health, well-being, and organizational effectiveness.

How: Steps We Will Take

- Use the Vicarious Trauma—Organizational Readiness Guide (VT-ORG) to assess our current response to VT and our need for additional policies and programs to address VT.
- Use the Vicarious Trauma Toolkit to access research and resources gathered specifically for our discipline.
- Review and update our policies and procedures to address gaps identified in our agency-wide assessment using the VT-ORG.
- Create a work environment and culture where it is safe to discuss VT and seek support when needed.
- Conduct an agency-wide training regarding the realities of VT, signs and symptoms, and effective individual and organizational strategies.

Organization/Agency Specific Details

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

For more information about vicarious trauma, visit <https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/>.

This product was produced by Northeastern University's Institute on Urban Health Research and Practice, in collaboration with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and supported by grant number 2013-VF-GX-K011, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this product are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.