

# At the Frontlines: The Pursuit of Self Care in the Workplace

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*“Call to Action: A Joint Venture to End Homelessness”*  
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The **Downtown Women's Center (DWC)** provides permanent supportive housing and a safe and healthy community fostering dignity, respect, and personal stability, and advocates ending homelessness for women.

Founded in 1978, DWC is the only resource in Los Angeles that is exclusively dedicated to serving the unique needs of homeless and very low-income women in downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row community.



*Jill and Rose, DWC Co-Founders*

# DWC Programs & Services

DWC is nationally recognized as a prototype for unique and effective programs serving homeless women and ending homelessness. DWC serves over 3000 women every year.



## DROP-IN DAY CENTER

- 200 women each day
- Services: Meals (100,000+) showers, phones & mail
- Trauma Recovery Center



## CLINICAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Case management, mental health & medical services
- Over 1200 women served



## HOUSING

- 119 units of permanent supportive housing
- 100 Veterans in HUD-VASH and SSVF
- 100 Housing for Health
- 95% of the women stay housed permanently



## PERSONAL & FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY

- Education, skill development, on-the-job training & transitional jobs
- Competitive job placement
- 900 women served



# Trauma-Informed Care: An Evidence-Based Practice

The ACE study (1997) created a new paradigm



# Trauma-Informed Care Organizations

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization.**

(SAMHSA, 2014)



“We must become the change we want to see.” –Mahatma Gandhi



# Continuum of Staff Experience

- **Compassion Satisfaction:** Positive feelings derived from competent performance, positive relationships with colleagues and conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution
- **Burnout:** Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feeling of personal accomplishment; work-related.
- **Compassion Fatigue:** Often used interchangeably with secondary traumatic stress; presence of PTSD symptoms caused by indirect exposure to traumatic material.
- **Vicarious/Secondary Trauma:** Changes in the inner experience of the caregiver resulting from empathic engagement with a traumatized client.



# Organizational Risk and Protective Factors

## Foster Risk Factors

- Lack of resources for clients and staff
- Lack of supervision
- Lack of support from colleagues
- Lack of acknowledgement

## Bolster Protective Factors

- Provide adequate training
- Diversify caseload
- Foster culture of support among colleagues
- Provide trauma-informed supervision
- Create a culture of empowerment that offers a sense of autonomy, shared leadership
- Values the voice of the staff
- Invest in physical safety measures



# Organizations Can Bolster Protective Factors

- Normalize Secondary Trauma
- Include Trauma-Informed Care principles on hiring practices, onboarding and early orientation training
- Balance workload
- Create a culture that supports collaboration through team meetings, retreats, esteems peers as experts
- Supervision must be conducted in a trauma-informed manner
- Solicit input; demonstrate how staff input makes positive change
- Create structure to discuss self-care
- Develop a protocol to respond to critical incidents
- Address Secondary Traumatization immediately



# Implementing Staff Self Care Plans

Comprehensive Self Care Plan		
Name:	Personal	Professional
Date:		
Physical		
Psychological		
Relational/Social		
Spiritual		

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# DWC's Approach to Fostering a Trauma-Informed Environment

Following guidance from *Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit*

1. Setting the Stage
2. Completed Organizational Self-Assessment
3. Formed Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup
4. Developing a Strategic Plan
5. Implementing Trauma-Informed Changes
6. Dissemination of Results/Community Training

Fuarino, K., Soares, P., Konnath, K. Clervil, R., and Bassuk, E. (2009). *Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit*. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Available at [www.homeless.samhsa.gov](http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov) and [www.familyhomelessness.org](http://www.familyhomelessness.org)



# Organizational Self Assessment Domains

## 1. Supporting Staff Development

- Training and Education
- Staff supervision, support, and self-care

## 2. Establishing a Safe and Supportive Environment

- Information sharing/open communication
- Cultural and gender competency
- Confidentiality
- Safety and Crisis Prevention Planning
- Consistency

## 3. Assessing and Planning Services

- Intake assessment and follow-up
- Developing goal plans
- Offering Trauma-Specific Interventions
- Involving current and former consumers

## 4. Adapting Policies

- Reviewing policies

## 5. Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement



# Organizational Activities: Supporting Staff Development

- Organizations Leadership communicates a clear and direct message that we are committed to creating a trauma-informed system
- Organizational stakeholders (individuals served, volunteers, staff at all levels, Board of Directors) are trained and buy-in to how this model creates a healing environment
- Hiring practices clearly communicate focus on trauma-informed services
- Job performance evaluations clearly describe staff expectations and behaviors that are aligned with trauma-informed care principles
- The organization ensures that supervisors and practitioners are supported in further developing their trauma-informed care competencies
- Support staff receives ongoing training, performance evaluations, and supervisory assistance in integrating trauma-informed care principles in their work
- The organization helps staff develop personally meaningful and useful stress management strategies



# Organizational Outcomes: Supporting Staff Development

- Increased better outcomes for individuals served
- Less staff turnover related to workplace dissatisfaction
- Productivity goals are met/Better outcomes for clients
- Stress related workers comp decreases
- Reduction of unplanned time off
- Staff surveys demonstrate higher satisfaction rates
- Client surveys demonstrate higher satisfaction rates



# Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue Tool (ProQOL)

Tool assesses for Compassion Satisfaction,  
Burnout, and Secondary Trauma

Let's try it out!

*© B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009–2012. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL). <http://www.proqol.org>. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold. Those interested in using the test should visit <http://www.proqol.org> to verify that the copy they are using is the most current version of the test.*



# Resources

- *Fuarino, K., Soares, P., Konnath, K. Clervil, R., and Bassuk, E. (2009). Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Available at [www.homeless.samhsa.gov](http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov) and [www.familyhomelessness.org](http://www.familyhomelessness.org)*
- *What About You? A Workbook For Those That Work With Others. [www.familyhomelessness.org](http://www.familyhomelessness.org)*
- Most of the presentation was based off of information from:  
*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801. Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, 2014. Available at [www.homeless.samhsa.gov](http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov)*



# Contact DWC

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Va Lecia Adams Kellum, Ph.D.  
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# HOW IT ALL STARTED



In 1650, the very first Sisters of St. Joseph met in this room in Le Puy, France, where they cared for 39 orphans and made lace to earn money

The lace symbolizes the trade the Sisters taught widows so they could be self-sufficient

St. Joseph Center  
was founded in 1976  
- the first facility was located at  
533 Rose Avenue in Venice, CA



# SJC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**St. Joseph Center's Mission** is to provide working poor families, as well as homeless men, women, and children of all ages with the inner resources and tools to become productive, stable and self-supporting members of the community.

Outreach & Engagement	Housing	Mental Health	Education & Vocational Training
Served 26,877* at Bread & Roses Café	Housed 500* family members in two years through HFSS	Housed 250* chronically homeless, severely mentally ill individuals in Venice & Santa Monica	Web development training program (Codetalk) graduated 40+ women, 50% are employed since January 2014
Served 3,000* people in the Food Pantry	Case managed 650* formerly homeless men, women, and children to help them retain stable, subsidized housing	Provided mental health services to 475* individuals, families, Veterans, and older adults	75%* of Culinary Training Program graduates have obtained employment

\*Annual Totals



# COMPASSION SATISFACTION & FATIGUE

## Compassion Satisfaction

Positive feelings derived from competent performance, positive relationships with colleagues and conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution



## Compassion Fatigue

Often used interchangeably with secondary traumatic stress; presence of PTSD symptoms caused by indirect exposure to traumatic material



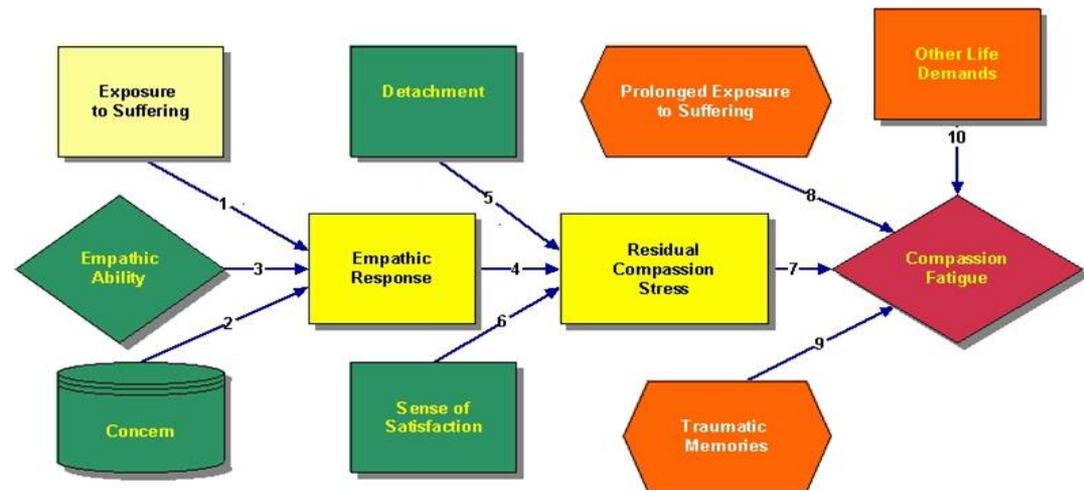
# FINDING MEANING, PURPOSE & PASSION

1. What makes you come alive?
2. What are your innate strengths?
3. Where do you add the greatest value?
4. How will you measure your life?



# SYMPTOMS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Bottled up emotions
- Loss of sense of humor
- Chronic physical ailments such as gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
- Substance abuse used to mask feelings
- Sadness, apathy, no longer finds activities pleasurable
- Poor self-care (i.e., hygiene, appearance)
- Recurring nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts or images
- Relationship issues and co-worker disputes
- Poor decision making and problem solving skills
- Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions



The Compassion Fatigue Process (Figley, 2001)

# HOW TO HELP AVOID COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Maintain work-life balance
- Create a self-care plan and make a commitment to yourself to follow through
- Identify your triggers and stressors that create stress and burnout in your life; learn to manage them
- Build a healthy support system
- Take the Compassion Fatigue self-tests regularly; Compassion Fatigue is never healed and it can creep back into our lives
- Raise your Compassion Satisfaction levels



# HOW SJC PROMOTES SELF-CARE

Organization Self-Assessment Domain	Output
<b>Supporting Staff Development</b>	Monthly and quarterly staff training, annual staff retreat, weekly supervision that addresses staff development
<b>Establishing a Safe and Supportive Environment</b>	Non hierarchical approach to management and supervision, organization wellness program (weekly yoga), allow flexibility in work hours, vacation and additional paid time off, hold debriefing sessions following traumatic events, activities that build community and connections
<b>Assessing and Planning Services</b>	Client satisfaction surveys, staff satisfaction assessments, staff focus groups
<b>Adapting Policies</b>	Include staff feedback in policy procedures and strategic planning
<b>Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	Use of consultant to assess climate and offer opportunities for staff to provide feedback

# COMPASSION SATISFACTION: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



- Identified what mattered
- Secured employment that drew upon my natural talent, skill, and passion
- Performed at high level of competency
- Developed positive professional relationships
- Discovered that my work has meaningful impact



# Meditation Exercise

Zachary Coil, LCSW  
St. Joseph Center



# Resources

- *Margie Warrell, Stop Playing Safe, 2013*
- *The Compassion Fatigue Process, Figley, 2001*
- <https://notesfromadoqwalker.com/2013/09/12/patricia-smith-compassion-fatigue-awareness-project/>



# Contact SJC

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