

Tips to Manage Secondary Trauma

1

Self-care

- **Prioritise self-care** to maintain your own well-being. Engage in activities that rejuvenate you, such as exercise, mindfulness, hobbies, and spending time with loved ones.
- **Set boundaries** to prevent overextending yourself and to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

2

Seek Supervision and Support

- **Regularly meet** with supervisors, mentors, or peers to discuss your experiences and feelings.

3

Develop Resilience and Coping Strategies

- **Learn** stress management techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation.
- **Develop** a toolbox of coping strategies that work for you to help mitigate the effects of secondary trauma.

4

Maintain Professional Boundaries

- While it's important to build strong relationships with young people, maintain appropriate boundaries to prevent becoming too emotionally invested.
- Be mindful of your own limitations and avoid taking on more than you can handle.

5

Know When to Seek Help

- If you experience persistent and severe symptoms of secondary trauma, do not hesitate to seek professional help from a doctor, therapist or counsellor.



Why self-care is so important when working with young people

Self-care is an essential component of maintaining your well-being when working with young people, especially when it involves dealing with trauma and difficult situations. Here's an elaboration on the importance of self-care:

- **Prevents Burnout:** Self-care acts as a protective shield against burnout, which is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion often experienced by professionals in high-stress roles. Regular self-care practices can help you sustain your passion and energy for your work.
- **Promotes Resilience:** Engaging in self-care activities enhances your resilience, enabling you to bounce back from challenging situations more effectively. This can help you stay emotionally and mentally healthy, even when dealing with difficult cases.
- **Enhances Emotional Well-being:** Self-care activities, such as practicing mindfulness, meditation, or engaging in hobbies, can improve your emotional well-being by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. It helps you maintain a more positive outlook.
- **Improves Physical Health:** Taking care of your physical health through exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep is essential for staying physically fit and resilient, which can directly impact your ability to cope with the demands of your job.
- **Maintains Work-Life Balance:** Self-care helps you set and maintain boundaries between your work and personal life. It ensures that you have time and space for your own needs, relationships, and interests outside of work.
- **Increases Compassion and Empathy:** When you care for yourself, you are better equipped to show compassion and empathy towards the young people you work with. You can be more present and emotionally available to support them effectively.
- **Prevents Vicarious Trauma:** By engaging in self-care, you reduce the risk of experiencing vicarious trauma or secondary trauma. Taking care of your own well-being allows you to process the challenging experiences you encounter in a healthier way.
- **Encourages Self-Reflection:** Self-care provides moments for self-reflection and introspection. This can help you become more self-aware and better understand how your work is affecting you emotionally and mentally.
- **Enhances Creativity and Problem-Solving:** Activities like creative pursuits or hobbies can stimulate your creativity and problem-solving skills. These qualities can be valuable in your work with young people.
- **Sets a Positive Example:** Demonstrating self-care practices sets a positive example for the young people you work with. It can encourage them to prioritise their own self-care and well-being.

Remember that self-care is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It's about finding activities and strategies that resonate with you personally and help you recharge. Developing a self-care plan tailored to your needs and consistently implementing it can significantly contribute to your ability to thrive in your role while taking care of your own health and well-being.