



# Vicarious Trauma & Victim Empowerment

## Chapter 4 Assessment Tool



### Responding to Vicarious Trauma

#### Questions to Ask: Know Your Staff

- Have you provided training to staff to teach and discuss the differences between SA and DV work?
- Have you reviewed staff performance to assess their strengths?
- Have all staff expressed comfort with accepting SA cases and representing SA survivors?
- Have staff been given the opportunity to voice concerns or questions about adding SA services to their work?

#### Questions to Ask: Prepare Staff for Vicarious Trauma

- Have you educated staff about vicarious trauma?
- Without requiring responses, have you asked staff to:
  - Consider their triggers?
  - Identify how they know when they are experiencing vicarious trauma?
  - Think about their coping mechanisms and what self-care looks like for them?
  - Reflect on their support systems?
- Have you provided staff with vicarious trauma resources?
- Have you identified internal resources that staff can access when experiencing secondary trauma?

#### Questions to Ask: Manage Vicarious Trauma at an Organizational Level

- Have you considered office-wide policies to proactively address and mitigate the impact of vicarious trauma (e.g., minimum turn-around time between intake and case acceptance, no intakes after 3:00pm, no Friday intakes)?
- Are intake responsibilities divided among staff?
- Have you encouraged staff to schedule time to reflect/process?
- Do you have the ability to offer diverse opportunities beyond direct services (e.g., outreach, training, development)?





## Chapter 4 Assessment Tool



- Do you have the ability to offer flexible schedules?

### Questions to Ask: Equip Staff to Manage Vicarious Trauma

- How can you offer or foster mentoring relationships?
- Can you partner staff on projects to foster collaboration?
- Have you scheduled regular case review meetings for direct services staff?
- Have you created an opportunity for the organization as a whole to meet regularly?
- Have you encouraged any specialized staff to meet regularly to discuss their work?

## Survivor Empowerment Model and a Trauma Informed Practice

### Questions to Ask: Survivor Empowerment Model

- Have you adopted a victim empowerment model?
- Have you educated staff about the survivor empowerment model?
- How have you integrated the victim empowerment model into your culture and daily practice?

### Questions to Ask: Survivor Empowerment: Your Role

- Have you trained staff to:
  - Validate survivor concerns and priorities?
  - Provide options without making decisions?
  - Explain possible outcomes without making decisions?
  - Decline any request by the survivor to make a decision for the survivor?

### Questions to Ask: Trauma-Informed Practice & Trauma Impact

- Has staff been trained to support survivors as they define their priorities?
- Have you prepared staff for the oft-changing nature of client priorities?
- Has staff been trained on the neurobiological impact of trauma?
- Has staff been trained on how to recognize the signs of trauma and how to appropriately respond?



## Chapter 4 Assessment Tool



- Have you considered how trauma may manifest differently within different communities (e.g., minors, LGBTQ, low-income, immigrants, etc.)? Do you have the resources to respond to these communities?
- Have you trained staff members, volunteers, and interns on the appropriate language to use with survivors?
- Have you trained staff who are answering the phone and/or greeting clients?
  - Do they know the appropriate language to use?
  - Do they know the proper tone to use with clients?
  - Are they aware of the heightened privacy concerns when serving this population?