

The cost of compassion: Preventing vicarious trauma

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**Background:** Burnout, secondary and vicarious traumatisation, and compassion fatigue are outcomes most alcohol and drug workers are aware of and motivated to avoid. These negative outcomes can occur because we are exposed to other people's trauma experiences. They can also occur because we are exposed to distressing content as part of our work (things like the details about domestic violence offences). Sometimes we are affected because we are exposed to high levels of service user distress or because we work with people experiencing significant disadvantage or who are at risk of extreme harm. These impacts can affect our wellbeing, work performance, and quality of life.

**Description of Model of Care/Intervention:** This workshop will identify the various ways that exposure to trauma and associated risks and distress can affect us. It will provide participants with a range of strategies to recognise the kinds of risks in their workplaces, understand their own reactions and use effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of exposure.

**Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:** 360Edge's workshops on preventing vicarious trauma are highly rated, with participants reporting an average increase of 72% in knowledge, 68% in skills, and 77% in confidence for *Preventing Vicarious Trauma*.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** This workshop will provide participants with opportunities to reflect on warning signs for burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue at work, and develop targeted self care strategies.