Beyond the Response: Addressing Compassion Fatigue and Behavioral Health Needs for Healthcare Providers

Shayne Brannman, MS, ASPR TRACIE Program Director
Rachel Kaul, LCSW, CTS, ASPR Division for At-Risk Individuals, Behavioral Health, & Community Resilience (ABC)
April Naturale, PhD, ICF

National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference
December 3, 2019
ASPR’s Priorities: Building Readiness for 21st Century Threats
Why ASPR TRACIE?

ASPR TRACIE was developed as a healthcare emergency preparedness information gateway to address the need for:

• Enhanced and rapid technical assistance
• A comprehensive, one-stop, national knowledge center for healthcare system preparedness
• Multiple ways to efficiently share and receive information between various entities, including peer-to-peer
• A way to leverage and better integrate support (force multiplier)
• Helping prepare deployed and field staff via our technical resources and subject matter experts
ASPR TRACIE: Three Domains

**TECHNICAL RESOURCES**
- Self-service collection of audience-tailored materials
- Subject-specific, SME-reviewed “Topic Collections”
- Unpublished and SME peer-reviewed materials highlighting real-life tools and experiences

**ASSISTANCE CENTER**
- Personalized support and responses to requests for information and technical assistance
- Accessible by toll-free number (1844-5-TRACIE), email (askasprtracie@hhs.gov), or web form (ASPRtracie.hhs.gov)

**INFORMATION EXCHANGE**
- Area for password-protected discussion among vetted users in near real-time
- Ability to support chats and the peer-to-peer exchange of user-developed templates, plans, and other materials
Behavioral Health Resource Examples

- Disaster Behavioral Health Resource Page
- Self Care Modules for Healthcare Providers
- Resources at Your Fingertips
- Mental/Behavioral Health (non-responders) Topic Collection
- Opioids: Frequently Asked Questions
- The Exchange Issue 4: Disaster Behavioral Health and Resilience
- Tips for Retaining and Caring for Staff after a Disaster

https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/dbh-resources
Goals

- Describe how to identify healthcare provider compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress
- Identify methods for healthcare executives to conduct stress management assessment, implement mitigation efforts, and improve work satisfaction for providers
- Describe ways to develop and implement a Cognitive Strengthening Preparedness Program
What is Stress?

A response characterized by physical and psychological arousal arising as a direct result of an exposure to any demand or pressure on a living organism.
Continuum of Stress: Where are you?

- Ready
- Reacting
- Injured
- ill

Performance

Stress Level

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC USE
Continuum of Stress: Where are you?

- Optimum
- Effective
- Reduced efficiency
- Creative
- Decisive
- Alert
- Stressed
- Under-involved
- Boredom
- Frustration
- 'Rust-out'
- Overload
- Difficulty concentrating
- Indecisive
- Irritable
- Anxious
- Confused
- Fatigue
- Exhaustion
- Burnout


UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC USE
Defining Stress

Mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

- Acute
- Chronic
- Traumatic

Severity of Symptoms
Overview of Stressors

Responders/Providers

- Time Away from Family
- Personal Safety
- Emotional Strain
- Case-load
- Work Guilt
- Work Pressure
Signs & Symptoms of Stress

• What are possible signs and symptoms of stress? (This can be from knowledge or experience)

• How do you know when you are stressed?

• What would others notice?
Signs & Symptoms

- Diversity in presentation of signs and symptoms
- Self reflection
- Methods for self check?

- Mood Swings
- Increased Acne
- Depression
- Headaches
- Appetite Change
- Low Energy
- Frequent Sickness
- Social Isolation
- Libido Changes
- Anxiety
- Aches & Pains
- Personal Hygiene
- Insomnia
- Irritability

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC USE
How ya doing?
Good
Good

Doing fine.
Doing... fiiiiiiine.

You sure?
WHEEZE-
YEP!

I am A-OKAY.
I am cool.

Doing great.
Two thumbs up.

© Sarah Andersen

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC USE
Consequences for Responders/Providers

- Impacts on decision making
- Increased risk of mistakes
- Professional burnout
- Impact on systems outside of work (family, friends, etc.)
- Mental/physical health implications
Secondary Trauma

- Traumatic event ➔ Secondary trauma
- Risk for health care responders/providers?

Diagram:
- Patients
- Disaster Environment
- Employment Pressures
Consequences: Burnout

• Cumulative emotional exhaustion and withdrawal as a result of workload and institutional stress.
• Occurs over time.
• Presents:
  ▪ Decreased performance
  ▪ Increased absenteeism
  ▪ Poor morale/attitude
Consequences: Compassion Fatigue

- Related to exposure working with those suffering from traumatic or distressing events.
- Onset can be early
- Prolonged exposure = Risk for responders/providers
- Presents:
  - Detachment or numbing,
  - Over-engagement
  - Blurred boundaries/roles
- Often very hard to self-diagnose
Post the Symptoms!

- List symptoms of stress on Post-Its
- These can be symptoms experienced personally or ones you’ve seen.
- Match the symptom to the “condition”
Individual Coping Mechanisms

- What are your stressors?
- How do you know when you are stressed?
- Consider feasibility of coping mechanisms стрategies.
- Do they fit you and your lifestyle?
- How will you follow through?

- Emotional Outlets
- Nutrition
- Fitness
- Personal Hygiene
- Meditation/Faith
- Sexual Health
- Social Life
- Safe Space
- Creating Boundaries
Reaching Out and Reflecting

Personal
• Who can you turn to?
• Existing support systems?
• What are you already doing?
• One thing you could change/do

Consider
• What other tools could assist you?
• Are there resources you need?
April Naturale, PhD
Disaster Recovery and Community Resilience
Senior Manager, ICF
Organizational Stress Management
The Executive Leadership Level

- Dedication to cause
- Managing staff not just tasks
- Fostering collaboration
- Developing strengths
Organizational Stress Management
The Executive Leadership Level

• Clear mission, roles, and responsibilities
• One direct line of authority
• Avenues to express concern
Organizational Stress Management
The Management/Supervisor Level

Supervision, Guidance, and Support
Organizational Response to Traumatic Stress Events

- PFA
- Drills
- Referrals
- Team training
- Information / psychoeducation meetings
- Groups for highly exposed
- Individual crisis intervention
- Focus on resilience and coping
Organizational Readiness Tools

- Organizational Assessment
- Stress Audit Checklist
- ProQOL-5
- OVC Vicarious Trauma Toolkit
Experience and Training

• Professional skills development
• Sense of confidence and competence
Cognitive Strengthening Program

- Cognitive restructuring / reframing
- Attention diversion
- Mindfulness training
- Adaptive engaging
- Adaptive affective expression

Stop → Look → Reframe
Attention Diversion

- Purposeful emotion regulation
- Decreases intense feelings
- Temporary
About Mindfulness

• Cognitive strengthener
• Any level is positive
• Focus on present moment
• Acknowledge things as they are

Mindfulness Exercise

• Sit in quiet place
• Feet on ground
• Hands on lap
• Close your eyes
• Focus on breathing
• Thoughts come and go
• Inhale positivity
• Exhale stress
Adaptive Engaging

- With others who understand and accept you
- In helpful activities
  - Increase coping skills
  - Build resilience
- Maintain integrity, dignity, and civility
- Avoid toxicity
- Avoid negative coping behaviors
Adaptive Affective Expression

- Identify distressing emotions
- Express emotions in healthy ways
- Identify your prodromal activities
- Identify and plan for triggers
Summary

• Compassion fatigue and burnout can have negative individual and organization-wide effects
• Interventions can mitigate these effects
• Organizational wellness is possible with agency-wide supports and structures
• Cognitive strengthening programs can help
Audience Discussion and Q&A
Additional Resources

- ASPR TRACIE: www.asprtracie.hhs.gov
- Division for At-Risk Individuals, Behavioral Health & Community Resilience (ABC): www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc
- SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center (SAMHSA DTAC): www.samhsa.gov/dtac
- National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: www ptsd.va.gov
- Professional Quality of Life (PROQOL): http://www.proqol.org