Developing Resilience in Trauma Workers

Adeyinka M. Akinsulure-Smith, Ph.D.
The City College of New York &
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture
Division 56 Early Career Psychologists Committee
July 11, 2013

The Cost of Caring: One Clinician’s Journey
What we saw...
What we heard...

What was happening to me?
What do we know about the issue?
Some of the Professions that are MOST vulnerable to VT:

- Healthcare providers
- Mental health professionals
- Emergency service personnel
- Firemen
- Police
- Search & Rescue teams

Other professions vulnerable to VT

- Journalists and media specialists involved in mass communication


Main risk factors for VT

1) Exposure to the stories (or images) of traumatized people
2) Your empathic sensitivity to their suffering, and
3) Any unresolved emotional issues that relate (affectively or symbolically) to the suffering seen.

Inspiration...
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture (PSOT)

- Since 1995, has served around 3,000 clients from close to 90 countries
- Multi-disciplinary services: medical, psychiatric, psychological, and social services

Next steps: Dire need for systematic interventions

✓ Personal
✓ Professional
✓ Organizational

THANK YOU!

Adeyinka M. Akinsulure-Smith, Ph.D.

aakinsulure-smith@ccny.cuny.edu
Selected References


