

Fall 2024 SOWK 581

Jacob Campbell, Ph.D., LICSW at  
Heritage University



Week 14  
Lecture Video

# EMPATHETIC STRAIN

Photo by [Meghna R](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Contextual Factors

e.g., emotional display norms and expectations, form/frequency of trauma exposure, support



## Secondhand Trauma & Empathetic Engagement



## Empathy-Based Strain

i.e., compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization



## Adverse Occupational Health Outcomes

e.g., burnout, depression, anxiety, health

## Negative Work Affect, Behaviors, & Cognitions

e.g., performance, turnover, satisfaction



## Individual Factors

e.g., sociodemographics, empathy-relevant individual differences, personality, coping

# MODEL OF EMPATHY-BASED STRESS PROCESS

(Rauvola et al., 2019)

# BURNOUT

Chronic workplace stress from workload or systemic issues.

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
- Physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual exhaustion

# Construct definitions, symptoms, and related terminology

(Rauvola et al., 2019)

Construct	Definition	Symptoms	Alternate & related terms
<b>Empathy-based stress</b>	Experience of adverse psychological and/or physical reactions to trauma exposure at work, resulting from empathic engagement following trauma exposure	Symptoms vary, depending on the specific manifestation of strain (i.e., vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, other health outcomes)	“Risks and hazards” of caring work
<b>Vicarious traumatization</b>	Transformation of the “inner experience” of trauma-exposed individuals (McCann and Pearlman 1990; Pearlman and Saakvitne 1995)	Symptoms include worldview shifts, cognitive schema disruptions	Vicarious trauma; vicarious posttraumatic growth, vicarious resilience
<b>Secondary traumatic stress</b>	Stress reaction induced following exposure to traumatic material; PTSD parallel (Figley 1995)	Symptoms similar to PTSD, but from secondary exposure	Secondary traumatization, secondary traumatic stress disorder
<b>Compassion fatigue</b>	Acute, affective phenomenon engendering high levels of stress after trauma exposure (Figley 1995)	Symptoms parallel original trauma victim’s (e.g., avoidance, hyperarousal, numbing, sleep disturbances)	Compassion stress; compassion satisfaction

# **REDUCING EMPATHETIC STRAIN**

**Development of personal self-care practices**

**Considering our professional practices**

**Engage in organizational support**

**Get direct support**

# REFERENCE

Rauvola, R. S., Vega, D. M., & Lavigne, K. N. (2019). Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Vicarious Traumatization: a Qualitative Review and Research Agenda. *Occupational Health Science*, 3(3), 297-336. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41542-019-00045-1>

Cummings, C., Singer, J., Hisaka, R., & Benuto, L. T. (2018). Compassion satisfaction to combat work-related burnout, vicarious trauma, and secondary traumatic stress. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(9-10), NP5304-NP5319. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518799502>