

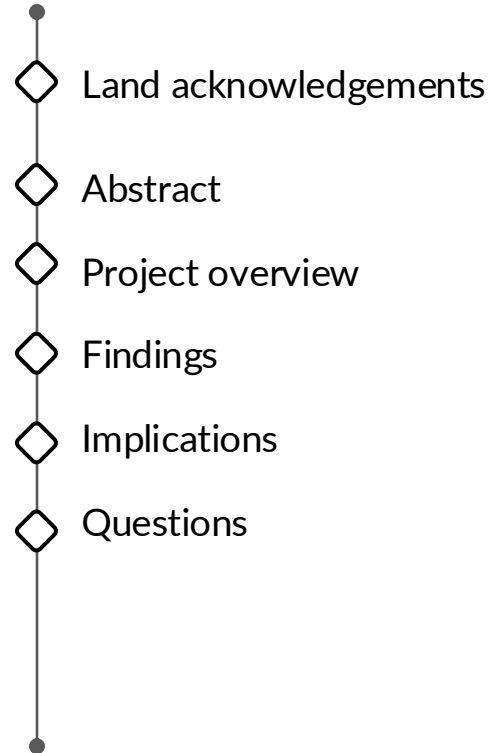


Secondary Traumatic Stress in Victim Service Providers

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OUTLINE

STS in VSP



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional inhabitants of the lands where this research was undertaken.

Algonquin College is located on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin people, who are the original inhabitants of the wide swath of territory along the Ottawa River. Lethbridge Polytechnic is located on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region, which includes the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakoda (Stoney), and Tsuut'ina Nations.

In Algonquin culture, it is appropriate for guests to acknowledge the hospitality of their hosts when entering their territory. With this tradition in mind, we respectfully thank our hosts at the IUC and the city of Dubrovnik for inviting us to share our work here.

If you live, learn, and work in an area that was colonized, we invite you to take a moment to reflect on the traditional lands on which you dwell.

<https://www.whose.land/en/>

<https://native-land.ca/>

ABSTRACT

Working with victims and survivors of trauma has both positive and negative effects on the people who do it. Practitioners often find their work fulfilling but may also experience negative impacts. In this study, we use a dataset of 884 survey respondents from various victim services sectors across Canada who completed an online survey that included the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) version 5, the Profile Analysis of Job Satisfaction Facet-Item (PAJS-FI), and custom scale questions related to turnover intention and preparedness in entering the field. Quantitative results demonstrate several areas of statistical significance between levels of secondary traumatic stress and factors related to the work. Quantitative data are contextualized with qualitative responses to the open-ended survey question, "How has working or volunteering with victims or survivors of crime affected you personally? Have you changed? What have you learned?", in which participants reflected on the ways in which working with survivors of trauma has affected their lives. A thematic analysis of qualitative findings shows that as a result of this work, victim service providers experience increases in stress and anxiety levels; changes in outlook/worldview; changes related to family/loved ones; and changes in outward behaviour. Based on our findings, we make recommendations for service providers, supervisors, and organizations to ensure that victim service providers are given adequate support to continue their important work. Our authorship team includes scholar-practitioners with previous and current experience working and volunteering in victim- and crisis-support services.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Victim Services & Vicarious Resilience

915

SURVEYS

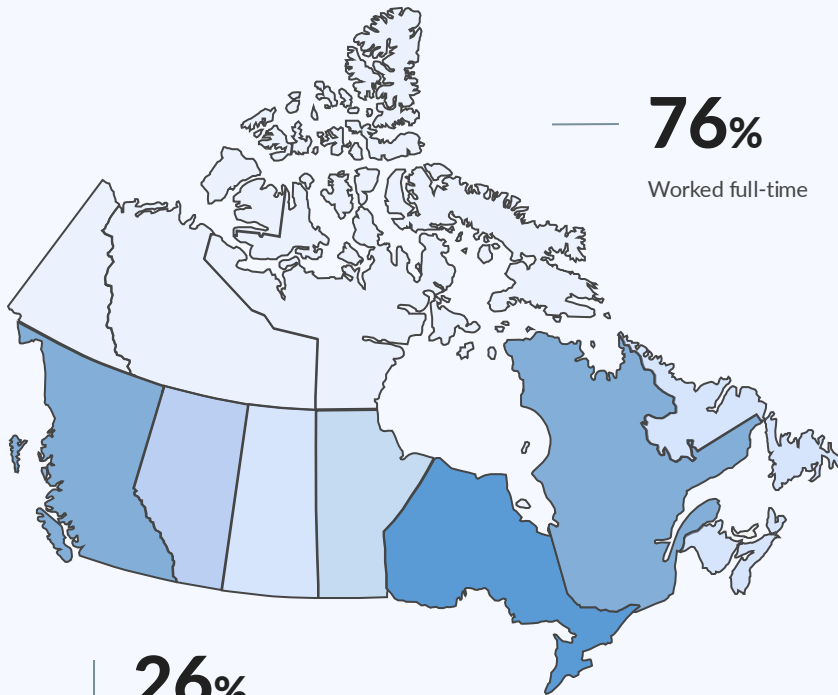
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INTERVIEWS



SECTORS

We heard from people in every province and territory working in government and non-government organizations that work with survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence; child protection and advocacy; restorative justice; counselling and family services; policy and research; healthcare; and community-based, police-based, and court-based victims services.



76%

Worked full-time

26%

Worked for government
organizations

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Victim Services & Vicarious Resilience

PLOS ONE

STUDY PROTOCOL

Protocol for a study on vicarious resilience in service providers for victims and survivors of violence

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Abstract

Few national studies examine victim service providers (VSPs), the important work that they do, and the resources and strategies contributing to their wellness at work. The proposed study aims to investigate the vicarious resilience of those working within the Canadian victim

OPEN ACCESS

Citation: Ferns A, Roebuck BS, McGlinchey D, Sattler PL, Scott H, Killian KD, et al. (2023)

EXPLAINER VIDEO VICARIOUS RESILIENCE

Victim Services & Vicarious Resilience 2020-2023



DEFINITIONS

SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

Refers to the emotional duress that someone experiences as a result of being exposed to another person's trauma.

COMPASSION FATIGUE

Refers to the physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by people who are exposed to others trauma over a prolonged period of time.

BURNOUT

Refers to a state of chronic stress; it is a grouping of symptoms that occur when a person's energy has a negative balance over time.

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF STS



HEALTH

- Increased tobacco, alcohol, and substance use
- disruptions to cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, immunological, neuroendocrine, and reproductive functioning



ABILITY TO SUPPORT CLIENTS

- Stress can compromise a person's decision making ability
- Health impacts can lead to needing to take time off
- Higher levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction are associated with poorer client outcomes
- This can have a contagion effect to others in the workplace



TURNOVER INTENTION

- There is a relationship between stress and people's intention to or actively seek other work

METHODOLOGY

- Demographics
- Supporting dependents?
- Faith, religion, spirituality
- Type of organization (government, non-government, Indigenous)
- Type of community served (rural, urban, remote, Northern)
- ProQOL
- Turnover Intention (custom scale)
- Profile Analysis of Job Satisfaction Facet-Item (PAJS-FI)
- Self-reported feelings of preparedness
- Open-ended final question

FINDINGS

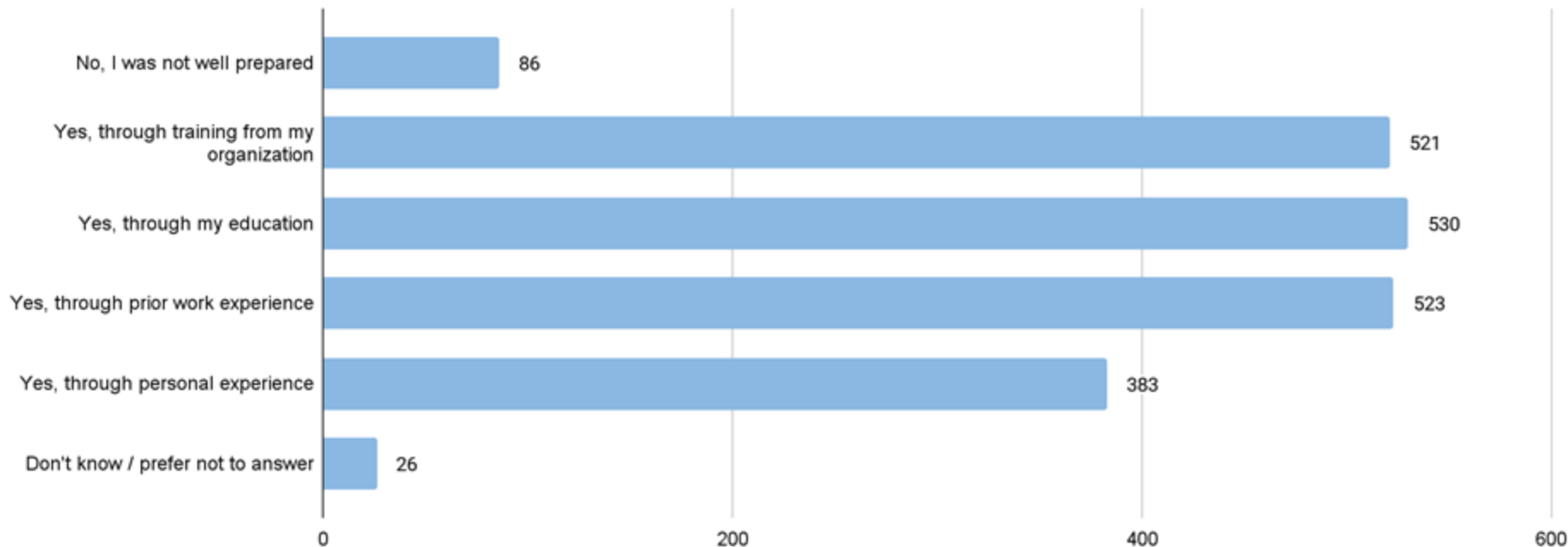


ProQOL SCORING

- **High Levels of STS (score of 42 or above)**
Scores above 43 indicate that the individual might want to consider the reasons for their elevated score, and possibly reach out to a supervisor, colleague, or medical professional for support
Note: only 5 participants met this threshold
- **Average Levels of STS (score between 23 and 41)**
Note: 487 participants scored average
- **Low Levels of STS (22 or less)**
Note: 392 participants scored low

PREPAREDNESS WHEN ENTERING THE FIELD

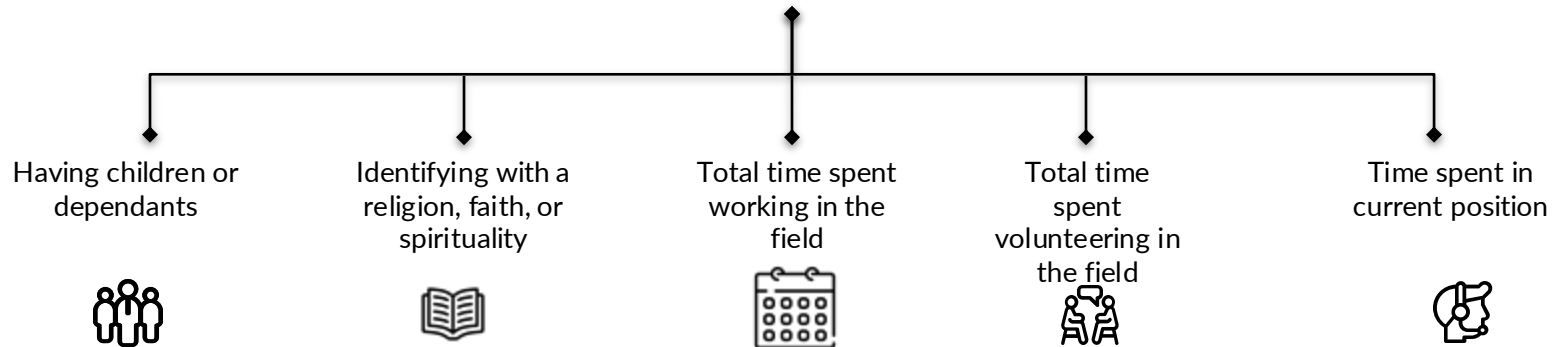
Do you feel you were well-prepared for your current job or volunteer position? Mark all that apply.



PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND STS

We did not find any statistically significant relationships between personal characteristics and STS scores.

Relationships we looked at:



ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AND STS

Profile Analysis of Job Satisfaction - Facet Item (PAJS-FI)

Item	<i>p</i>
1.Information and communication	.020**
2. How demanding my job is	<.001***
3. Relationship to my direct colleagues	.098
4. Relationship to my direct supervisor	.162
5. Organization and management	.001**
6. Chances of moving up	.006**
7. Working conditions	<.001***
8. Participation in decision making	.045**
9. Work and vacation times	<.001***
10. Compensation from the employer	.032**
11. Extended benefits	.003**

****p* < .001.

***p* < .05.

(Lepold et al., 2018)

STS AND TURNOVER INTENTION

Turnover Intention

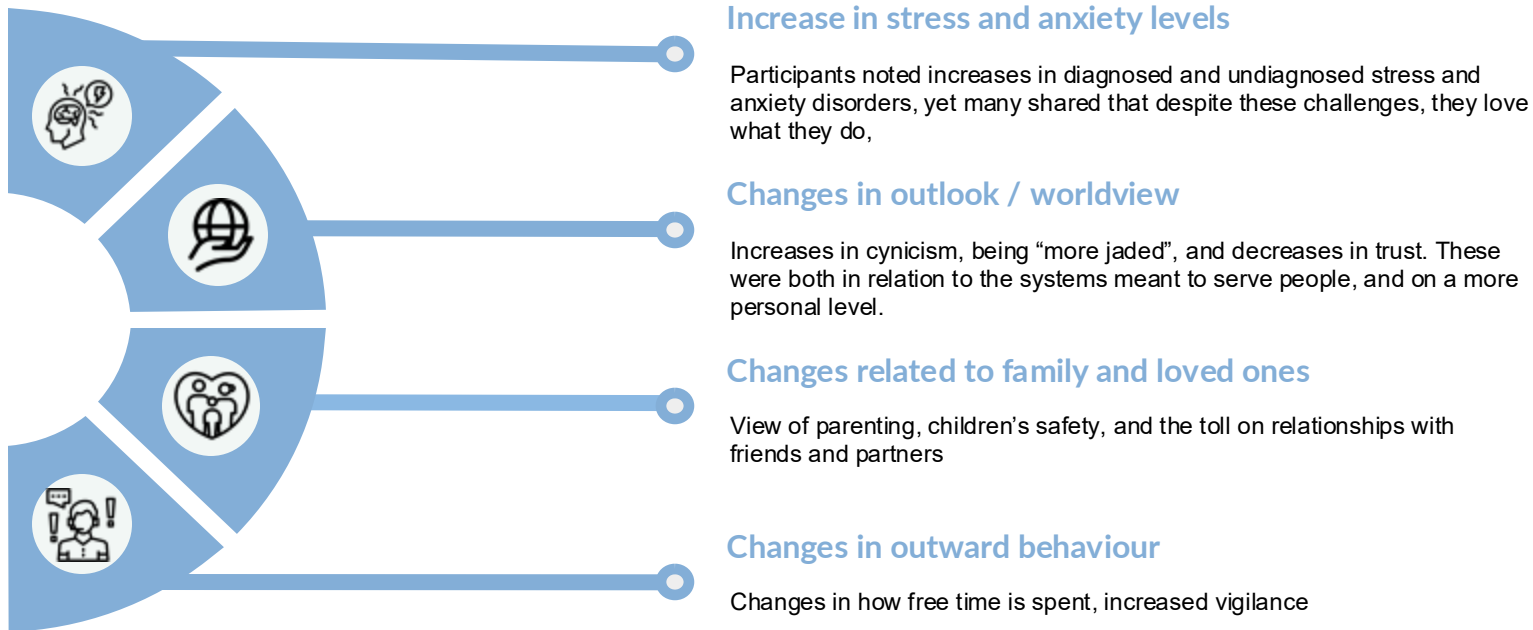
Item	<i>p</i>
1. I frequently think about quitting my job	<.001***
2. I am planning to search for a job in the next 12 months	<.001***
3. I worry about the funding for my position or organization	<.001***

*** $p < .001$.

** $p < .05$.

IMPACT OF STS

Qualitative data analysis



POWERFUL QUOTES

→ “Overall I think the work we do and those we do it for is very devalued in our society. Tired of the lack of appreciation and respect especially from funders, police partners and our community. **We work so hard and give so much to the victims we work with and yet very rarely do I see my team be recognized for this.** We do the work for very little pay, not benefits and always having to fight to get respect from policing partners. It is exhausting and at times hopeless.”

“I now have diagnosed PTSD, I have suffered two burnouts, but I still love what I do and wouldn't change my career path”

“It makes me stressed, but it's a fulfilling job knowing that I am making a difference”

“I feel more hopeless about our social systems regarding mental health, domestic abuse, poverty and marginalized groups than ever before”

“It has lowered my level of hope and trust in the system, given me struggles with balancing my work vs. personal life, taken precious vitality and energy away from me which gives me less ability to live a fulfilling personal life...**sometimes I feel like my only worth is to help others build a fulfilling life for themselves as they grow through their healing, but I have nothing left to give myself that same gift and attention.**”

CONCLUSIONS

Victim Services & Vicarious Resilience 2020-2023

ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION IS KEY

Our findings emphasize that organizational factors contribute more significantly to secondary traumatic stress than personal factors



Recommendations

- ◆ Professors and instructors include self-care instructions in the classroom and include discussions on the hazards associated with working in trauma fields
- ◆ For individual service providers, complete self assessments at regular intervals to recognize changes in their STS levels and intervene.
- ◆ At the organizational level, introduce STS management strategies early so that new hires are aware of prevention and intervention strategies.
- ◆ STS support be include in OHS plans
- ◆ Trauma-informed supervision
- ◆ Organizations acknowledge and dismantle barriers to self care.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

How can trauma-informed supervision be feasibly implemented in resource-strapped organizations?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

How might funders be engaged in recognizing the hidden emotional costs of service work?

THANK YOU!



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