

# Partners in Prevention Network Meeting

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Queen Vic Women's Centre

## Notes

Personal implications of violence prevention work

**Workshop led by Deb Bryant, Western Centre Against Sexual Assault**

Vicarious Trauma: also known as burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, work stress.

Effects of vicarious trauma:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sleeplessness</li><li>- Loss of creativity</li><li>- Lack of motivation</li><li>- Loss of hope</li><li>- Substance abuse</li><li>- Physical/ emotional exhaustion</li><li>- Nightmares</li><li>- Taking work 'thoughts' home</li><li>- Loss/increase in appetite</li><li>- Withdrawing from family/friends</li><li>- Not taking phone calls</li><li>- Hyper vigilance</li><li>- Scattered focus</li><li>- Judgemental</li><li>- More aggressive in speech</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Humour</li><li>- Seeing the world through a gendered lens</li><li>- Feeling unsafe</li><li>- Trust</li><li>- Depression</li><li>- Loss of discernment</li><li>- Losing grounding</li><li>- Guilt</li><li>- Not enough...</li><li>- Powerlessness</li><li>- Lack of patience</li><li>- Lack of tolerance</li><li>- Loss of boundaries</li><li>- Physical illness</li></ul>

Vicarious trauma has a **cumulative impact**, it builds up over time, everything can seem fine until something (potentially minor) finally tips the balance.

Particular incidences at work may resonate with our own experiences.

### Issues for violence prevention/community education workers:

- Often get no supervision/ time to discuss personal impact of work.
- Teachers also rarely get supervision or support.
- Students can often be resistant or apathetic about prevention messages.
- Facilitator needs to walk a boundary between engaging and challenging, this means we often have to acknowledge opinions we disagree with.
- Still exposed to stories of trauma/violence/sexual assault but passive, unable to intervene or help.
- Rarely get to witness the impact/outcomes of their work – change in attitudes or behaviour.

Strategies to reduce vicarious trauma:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Doing difference tasks</li><li>- Having agency</li><li>- Networking</li><li>- Break isolation</li><li>- Training and PD</li><li>- Reflection</li><li>- Org. support/culture</li><li>- Self advocate</li><li>- Part time work</li><li>- Massages/facials</li><li>- Weekends away</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Supervision</li><li>- Workload balance</li><li>- Learn to say 'no'</li><li>- Know our limits</li><li>- Self respect</li><li>- Authentic power</li><li>- Breaks</li><li>- Debriefing</li><li>- 5 mins connection with colleague</li><li>- Positive role modelling</li><li>- Other social worlds</li></ul>

<b>Strategies to reduce vicarious trauma:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal writing</li> <li>- Memory box</li> <li>- Avoid certain movies</li> <li>- Other interests/hobbies</li> <li>- Accountability/ transparency</li> <li>- Non-judgemental validating</li> <li>- Physical activity</li> <li>- Yoga/meditation</li> <li>- Dancing</li> <li>- Reading</li> <li>- Fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living away from work</li> <li>- Rituals (eg. shower after work, visualise cut off on drive home)</li> <li>- Love</li> <li>- Counselling</li> <li>- OK to cry</li> <li>- Eating</li> <li>- Laughing</li> <li>- Play</li> <li>- Jokes</li> <li>- Spirituality</li> </ul>

One participant talked about this metaphor for self-care strategies:

<b>Bum bag/ Pocket</b>	In the moment	Deep breath, stretch, debrief, have a cuppa
<b>Back pack</b>	Regularly	Massage, supervision, hobbies, journal
<b>Suitcase</b>	Occasionally	Holiday, PD/conference, sense of spirituality

## PiP network evaluation

Kiri ran a few activities to get a sense of how the PiP project has impacted people's work over the last 12 months and some ideas for the next three years. Information from these activities will be used in PiP's final evaluation report for VicHealth.

### The year in review

#### Forum

- Moira Carmody
- VicHealth Framework
- Anj Barker
- Hearing about projects

#### Network meetings

- Evaluation
- Info sharing
- Self-care

#### Information being sent out

- current
- feeds passion
- links with other work that's happening

#### Bonus outcomes

- Publicise programs.
- Having a person to hold the work (Kiri).
- Cohesiveness and interconnection.
- Identity for violence prevention work with young people.
- Acknowledgement of the work that is taking place.
- Good food.

### **Something positive from today...**

- New strategies and support
- Feeling of connectedness and focus
- Networking – hearing other people's experiences
- Reunification
- Validation!
- More arguments about worker care to take back to agency
- More info to share in other networks
- Importance of the prevention work we do
- Fantastic opportunity for meeting like-minded people, networking!!!
- A chance to reflect on self-care and give thought to maintaining own health in this work
- A list of strategies for everyone in my organisation!
- Meeting new women
- A glimpse into the positives of our work
- Self-care for prevention workers is related to but distinct from that of direct service workers and needs to be researched, debated, published and legitimised
- Understanding of why I feel overwhelmed at x's considering I do prevention and not intervention
- Deb – fantastic... relevant, clear and practical
- Participant connection
- All activities energizing and interesting and effective
- Room sooo beautiful (p.s. I had fun!)

### **Ideas to improve the network**

- More opportunity to talk about our individual projects, debrief, brainstorm new ideas, troubleshooting and celebrating success
- Perhaps a time for regional/program updates via email or at meetings
- Provide information, tracking on people's projects and results of evaluation
- Continue to provide training as well as networking
- To have firm foundation to lobby for change, make young people's voices heard!
- To have presence in media (headed by Kiri)
- Be conscious of short 'food' break earlier in the day
- Have one physical activity eg. stretching or clothed massage
- Showcase current programs
- Perhaps there could be 10-15 mins at each network meeting for a worker or 2 to present re their work and some key issues – a kind of 'peer resourcing' discussion
- Expanding participation across the state
- Opportunity to showcase the work being done ie. In-depth examples
- More skills based meetings

### **Support over next 3 yrs**

- Continue doing what you are doing!
- Provide training
- Telling people about my project
- Providing contact information for my project
- Develop a stronger voice with policy makers and avenue to advocate for programs and \$'s
- Not sure what my work will look like over the next 3 years
- Be available to present as a significant resource, body of knowledge in this area
- PDs, mapping general youth orgs programs across the state
- Publicise programs, provide training, network opportunities, workshop on engaging schools/agencies in prevention work, what's happening at policy level and how it affects our work
- Continue to advocate in policy and decision making re prevention, on behalf of the workers and the prevention principles and framework.
- Visit regional areas and run a full day for locals