

**Staying Inside the Window of Tolerance:  
An Advanced Training on Secondary  
Traumatic Stress and Resiliency**

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**Self-Awareness  
Alert**

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**Learning Objectives**

Participants will be able to:

- ☐ Enact skills to self monitor and move inside the window of tolerance when dysregulated
- ☐ Utilize peer and supervisory support strategies to address STS and build resilience
- ☐ Apply evidence-based strategies to the organizational context to improve others' ability to stay inside their window of tolerance
- ☐ Develop a plan to create secondary traumatic stress informed organizations using data driven assessment and response strategies

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### Definitions

- Secondary Traumatic Stress is the emotional distress that results when an individual is exposed to the firsthand trauma experiences of another.

Hearing trauma details

Reading about trauma details

Seeing trauma's impact

Testifying in court

Conducting investigations

- Burnout is not a trauma condition; result of long hours, few resources
- Moral distress- knowing what to do but not having the ability to do the right thing

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### Traumatic Stress Symptoms Following Indirect Exposure

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### Understanding the Complexity of STS

**Protective and Response Factors**  
Resilience, intervention utilization, practice strategies

**Nature of Exposure**  
Type, Severity and Dose

**Co-Existing Conditions**  
Moral Distress, Burnout, general distress, other health or mental health conditions.

**Personal Risk Profile**  
Prior trauma history  
PTSD Risk Factors

**Organizational Context**  
Type of work  
How STS informed is the Organization  
How the socioenvironmental context impacts the organization

**Socioenvironmental Context**  
Historical or community trauma  
Racism, disproportionality  
Social support  
Social priorities

**The Complexity of STS**

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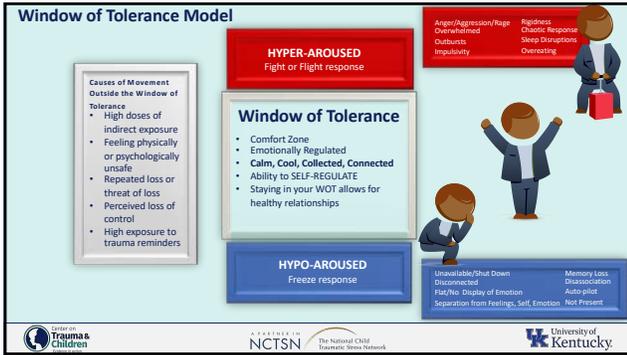
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### Reflective Exercise

Think about the complex elements related to STS

Take a few moments to write down 3 issues that most impact your experience of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Be as detailed as you can. Is it related to a particular client, situation, your own triggers from past trauma exposure?

Is there a time of day or sensory experience that is associated with your distress?

How does this move you outside your Window of Tolerance?

- Do you see signs of hypo-arousal?
- Do you see signs of hyperarousal?

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### Screening and Assessment Considerations

- Window of Tolerance
- Mindfulness
- Supervision, buddy, therapist evaluation
- Part of a continuum of care
- STS, burnout, moral distress should be framed as normal occupational hazard
- Privacy, confidentiality paramount

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## Individual Assessment Tools

- Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale
- Professional Quality of Life Scale V
  - Burnout*
  - Compassion Satisfaction*
  - Compassion Fatigue*
- Moral Distress Scale Revised (for healthcare providers)








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## Question

- What screening or assessment approaches related to workforce wellness are you currently using?






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### Organizational Assessment

Provides a baseline to see what programs, policies and procedures are in place and what is needed related to STS







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### Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment

- To operationalize the organization's role in creating a STS informed culture
- Describe characteristics of a STS informed organization
- Assist organizational members in identifying areas of STS risk, and highlight where the organization is doing a good job of promoting resiliency
- Provide a blueprint for individualized training
- Track progress towards desired change over time







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### Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment Domains







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### Let's Try it Out

**THE SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS-INFORMED ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT (STSI-OA)**  
©Copyright 2014 Emily Spring, Leslie Ross, Kimberly Seidman, Brian Miller, Cynthia Huber, Jenni-Han, James Henry, and James Conroy

Secondary Traumatic Stress refers to the trauma symptoms caused by indirect exposure to traumatic material, transmitted during the process of helping or wanting to help a traumatized person.  
 Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt to stress and adversity in a healthy manner.  
 Organization, as used in this context, refers to the workplace setting that will be the target of this assessment.  
 After reading each item, mark the corresponding box under the appropriate choice as to how the organization performs on that indicator.  
 1=Not at all; 2=Rarely; 3=Somewhat; 4=Mostly; 5=Completely; 6=N/A

**SCALE**

THE ORGANIZATION PROMOTES RESILIENT-BUILDING ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE THE FOLLOWING:	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Basic knowledge about STS	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Monitoring the impact of STS on professional well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Maintaining positive focus on the core mission for which the organization exists	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. A sense of hope (e.g., a belief in a client's potential for trauma recovery, healing and growth)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Specific skills that enhance a worker's sense of professional competency	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Strong peer support among staff, supervisors and staff and/or outside consultants	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Healthy coping strategies to deal with the psychological demands of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Go to [www.stsinformed.com](http://www.stsinformed.com) on your phone and complete online

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### Reflection

 In what domains did you score the highest?

 What is happening in your organization that you are most proud of?



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### Organizational Plan



Use your STSI-OA results to identify areas of strength and challenge that exist in your organization

Consider who should be involved in creating and implementing the plan

Determine how to measure changes

How do you anticipate these organizational changes would impact your ability to stay inside your Window of Tolerance?

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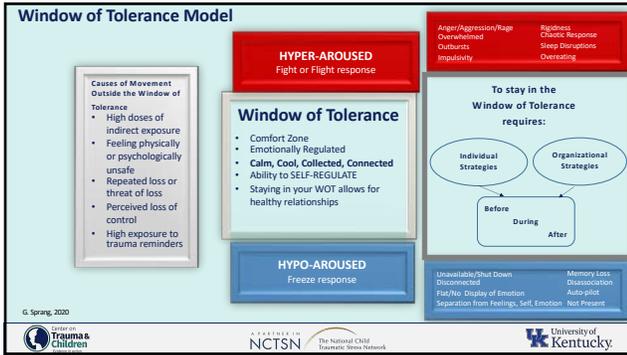
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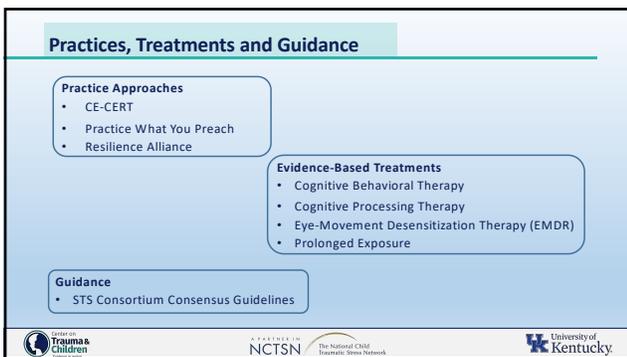
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Self-Care:  
There is an App for that...

HEADSPACE

Discover Calm  
The #1 App for Meditation and Sleep

Meet Calm

Meditate  
Learn the life-changing skill of meditation

Sleep  
Get more rested sleep and wake up feeling refreshed

Wisdom  
Live the changing seasons from experts in mental health

Music  
Exclusive songs to help you focus, relax, and sleep

Learn to meditate and live mindfully

Hundreds of themed sessions on everything from stress to sleep. Filter-based recommendations for busy schedules. SOS exercises in case of sudden emergencies.

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Supervision/  
Peer Strategies

STS Informed Supervision

Accountability Partners

Peer to Peer PFA

Helping Our Peers Excel (HOPE) Teams

Low Impact Debriefing/Processing

- Increased Self-Awareness
- Fair Warning
- Consent
- Limited Disclosure

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Chandra's Story

- How does it feel to hear/read this story? Does any of it feel familiar?
- What are Chandra's STS symptoms? How might the symptoms be impacted by her personal identity and experiences?
- Based on what you have learned about intervention, what strategies might you recommend to move her back into the WOT?
- What would you recommend for her organization?

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### Individual Plan

- Looking at the 3 challenges that you identified in the reflective exercise earlier, pick one to look at first.
  - What types of strategies that were discussed might move you inside your Window of Tolerance?
    - Identify individual strategies
    - Identify peer support strategies
  - Identify how you will implement the identified strategies

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Each person has a Window of Tolerance and is acting on their knowledge and skill to stay inside

Have compassion for everyone you meet, even if they don't want it. What appears bad manners, an ill temper or cynicism is always a sign of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen. You do not know what wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone.

*Miller Williams*

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### Reflective Exercise: Compassion Satisfaction

*It is critical to have ways to reflect the positive feelings and rewards that come with the work, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society.*

**Grace and Goosebumps**

List 2-3 moments of:

- **Grace**- times when others showed me kindness or grace, or that I witnessed others being shown grace
- **Goosebumps**- things that remind me why I wanted to do this work in the first place



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### Additional Resources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) resources on Secondary Traumatic Stress includes fact sheets, articles and self-care tips: <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/secondary-traumatic-stress/nctsn-resources>
- Phone Apps and other websites with information on mindfulness
  - Headspace [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)
  - Calm [www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)
  - Insight Timer [www.insighttimer.com](http://www.insighttimer.com)
  - Mindfulness Coach [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/app/vid/mobile/mindfulnesscoach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/app/vid/mobile/mindfulnesscoach_app.asp)
- *Provider Resilience App*- developed by the Defense Department's National Center for Telehealth and Technology PTSD Coach App [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/app/vid/mobile/ptsdcoach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/app/vid/mobile/ptsdcoach_app.asp)
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Solutions and Innovation Center (STS-ISC): This is the Center that created the Trauma, Stress and Caregiver Well-Being Training. They have other supports and resources for STS as well. <https://www.uky.edu/ctac/stsisc>
- TEND Academy; provides resources and training to those working in high stress, high trauma exposed workplaces:
  - Three-Minute Breathing handout with Diana Tikasz from Tend Academy: <https://www.tendacademy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Three-Minute-Breathing-Space-postcard-TEND-2020.pdf>
  - Grounding Technique- Feet on the Floor video with Diana Tikasz from Tend Academy: <https://www.tendacademy.ca/videos/>
  - Hot Walk and Talk Protocol: <https://www.tendacademy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Hot-Walk-Talk-Dr-Fisher-COVID19.pdf>





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### Contact Information



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STSI-OA download [www.uky.edu/CTAC/stisoa](http://www.uky.edu/CTAC/stisoa)      Take our free screeners <https://www.uky.edu/ctac/tier3screening>





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