Tips for Holistic Trauma-Informed Representation

Presented by:

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Introductions:

Bridgette Stumpf

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Network for Victim Recovery of DC

Dawn Jackson

Jackson & Associates
Attorneys and Counselors at Law
JUST A NOTE

ON LANGUAGE
Victim v. Survivor

ON CONTENT
Will be covering case examples

SHORT & LONG-TERM SUPPORT
1) Discuss the hallmarks of a trauma-informed litigation practices.

2) Identify tools that encourage empowerment throughout the attorney/client relationship.

3) Build resiliency for potential compassion fatigue.
OBJECTIVE 1: Discuss the hallmarks of a trauma-informed litigation practices.
Define Trauma-Informed Practice
1. Know how to identify manifestations of trauma in clients.
2. Prepare for trauma ques and communicate plan to minimize trauma responses.
3. Ask for permission when you need to adjust the attorney/client relationship.
4. Be willing to adapt the litigation strategies.
5. Prevent compassion fatigue through maintaining wellness.
Honor Clients’ Identities, Lived Experiences & Trauma Histories
CHRONIC TRAUMA & MEMORY RESEARCH

• Decreased size of hippocampus
• Hard time recalling the trauma
• But recall the physical and emotional feelings associated with the trauma
• Physiologically not able to simply ignore emotions in order to increase logical thinking
• Think of it as a broken leg
OBJECTIVE 2: Identify tools that encourage empowerment throughout the attorney/client relationship.
SPEAKING TO SURVIVORS: PRACTICE TIPS

• Litigation preparation considerations

• Create opportunities for choice (remember power with, not power over)

• Expectation management

• Strategies to ground and access the frontal lobe

• Kindness with boundaries
OBJECTIVE 3:
Build resiliency for potential compassion fatigue.
Compassion Fatigue

A natural response to hearing difficult stories of trauma, violence, abuse, etc. over and over (being in proximity to pain and trying to help).

Can occur due to a combination of:

• The story itself
• Feeling like you can’t do enough to help
• Cumulative exposure
• Lack of support
• Helper’s personal history and trauma experiences/ques
Compassion Fatigue Signs

• Anger, irritability, tearfulness
• No time or energy for individual needs
• Loss of pleasure in work, loss of hope
• Nightmares, negative coping
• Overwhelming sense of responsibly
• Trauma story searching
Compassion Fatigue & the Legal Context

Research found that attorneys who work with survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and criminal defendants experienced higher rates of vicarious trauma symptoms than social workers and mental health professionals.

Levin and Greisberg, Vicarious Trauma in Attorneys, 24 Pace L. Rev. 245, available at: https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1189&context=plr
Building Resilience in Legal Teams

1. Assess levels of compassion fatigue
2. Commit to fostering resilience
3. Practice self-awareness and self-management
4. Tap into support structures and relationships
5. Maintain wellness
Build & Maintain Wellness

1. Mindfulness
2. Attitude of gratitude
3. Make Moves
4. Purposefulness
5. Social Support
6. Laugh
Sign I Saw: TELL YOUR CAT  I SAID PSPSPS

My Cat:
QUESTIONS?
FEEDBACK?

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