

Vicarious Resilience

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Vicarious resilience is a unique process characterized by the positive effect client trauma survivors' resiliency has on helpers. It involves positive meaning-making, growth and transformations in the helpers' experience resulting from exposure to clients' resilience in the course of conversations that address trauma recovery. It is comprised of the following factors: Changes in life goals and perspectives, client-inspired hope, increased recognition of clients' spirituality as a therapeutic resource, increased self-awareness and self-care practices, consciousness about power and privilege relative to clients' social location, increased capacity for resourcefulness, and increased capacity for remaining present while listening to trauma narratives.

Mindful and experiential reflection and dialogue on the following questions can help access VR:

- ↳ Clients who have experienced traumatic events and who suffer from traumatic stress impact us in many ways. How have you been impacted?
- ↳ How do you benefit from the trauma work you do with your clients?
- ↳ Explore your own ways of overcoming personal adversities and consider the lessons you have learned from those experiences.
- ↳ Is there someone who you regard as a “hero/heroine” because of her/his overcoming trauma/adversity and who has been an inspiration for you?
- ↳ Is there a community that you admire because of its overcoming trauma/adversity and that has been an inspiration for you?
- ↳ How did this person/community overcome adversity/trauma?
- ↳ What did you learn about change from this person/community?
- ↳ How do you carry the learning from this legacy into your work?

Benefits of Attending to and Experiencing VR

Helpers may enhance their capacities to engage in self-care, to raise consciousness around issues of relative power and privilege, increase connection with others, and be present during trauma narratives.

A prioritizing of VR may lead to proactive decisions around work-life balance and adoption of techniques such as mindful meditation and body awareness.

Attention to VR may foster more positive emotions (e.g., gratitude), increased self-compassion, and increased consciousness around social equity issues.

VR helps expand helpers' recognition of clients' responses to trauma beyond the consulting room.

Helpers can learn to habitually expand their lens to include positive emotions and beliefs relative to the reciprocal and potentially positive impact of their work with clients.

Helpers may enhance their sense of satisfaction and mutual affirmation within the relationship

Hernandez, P., Gangsei, D., & Engstrom, D.(2007). Vicarious resilience: A qualitative investigation into a description of a new concept. *Family Process, 46*, 229-241.

Killian, K., Hernandez-Wolfe, P., Engstrom, D. & Gangsei, D. (2017). Development of the Vicarious Resilience Scale (VRS): A Measure of Positive Effects of Working with Trauma Survivors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*.9(1), 23-31 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000199>