

## **Ways Child Welfare Professionals Can Prevent Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Adapted from NCTSN Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit and  
Treatment Planning for Complex Trauma: Conceptualization & Core Components  
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### **Agency Strategies:**

- Organizational recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance of secondary trauma and the impact on workers
- Fostering a culture of resilience and hope in the organization
- Establishing training, education and policies that are consistent with current knowledge of risk and prevention of secondary traumatization
- Sufficient vacation, sick and personal time
- Safe physical space
- Access to employee assistance programs that cover mental health services
- Balanced caseloads
- Access to good supervision that:
  - helps workers to maintain balance and perspective in their work including establishing boundaries between themselves and clients, providing the opportunity to talk about how they have been affected by trauma and offering support in working through the issue
  - Fosters a healthy and supportive team that promotes a solid connection to coworkers and colleagues to avoid professional isolation (either geographic or social isolation from others)

### **Personal Strategies:**

- Being aware of and respecting your limits
- Building a comprehensive toolbox that includes knowledge of a variety of training, tips and techniques you can use in your work
- Establishing a self-care regimen that includes activities that rejuvenate you so you can return to this work refreshed, relaxed and energetic
- Maintaining a balance between work and personal life – are we able to maintain our boundaries, our identity outside of this work?
- Awareness of your own personal trauma history and finding an outlet to give voice to those feelings and emotions
- Engaging in activities or relationships that restore hope and serve as reminders of the benevolent side of humanity
- Continually monitoring your reactions and response to this work and maintaining the perspective that human service/trauma work is often long-term, we often see setbacks but it is ultimately hopeful and future-oriented work.