**November 2017 Edition**

Hello All,

As you may recall,  former Trauma Response Program (TRP) MSW student, Amber Mohrmann, conducted a survey last spring assessing the understanding and use of trauma-informed practice within our clinic. To this end, a primary finding obtained from the survey was interest and lack of knowledge about how working with trauma survivors impact providers and ways to overcome it.   It is against this background that the TRP wants to share with you the notes below on the impacts of working with clients who survive traumatic events and self-care considerations.

**How does the work we do impact us?**

Research has shown that **secondary traumatic stress** is a risk we incur when we engage empathetically with our traumatized clients. Being emotionally there for our client is what significantly contributes to their healing process. This also, however, makes us vulnerable to absorb a portion of the trauma and experience trauma symptoms ourselves.

**Burn out** is also another risk we may face from the long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations with our work. Researchers define burn out as a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in traumatic and demanding circumstances.

**How do we reduce the impacts?**

Self-care is an essential clinician’s survival plan to reduce the effects of emotionally demanding practice. SAMSA defines **self-care** as activities and practices that we can engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and maintain and enhance our short and long term health and well-being.

Below are some things we can do to mindfully create and advance our self-care plans.

1.    Identify what you do now to manage the stress in your life. This can help you to observe the coping strategies you already use and determine whether they are healthy and effective, or need to change.  For a self-care plan starter kit go to:         <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>

2.    Maintain the self-care efforts that are already working and healthy, and commit to engaging in these efforts on a regular basis to take care of yourself. You deserve it and your clients/patients will benefit!

3.   Do you have a tendency to put the needs of others first?  Make a commitment to yourself. Self–care is not only essential for your well-being but it is a key element for your effective personal and professional life.

4.    Share your self-care plans and commitment to your friends, families, and colleagues.  This will be helpful for exchanging new self-care ideas, and provide encouragement and support.

5.    Remember that self-care is always a work in progress!