

lifewise

mental health peer services

Support Through Experience



Land Acknowledgement

As an act of reconciliation, we respectfully acknowledge the land on which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has now been erased forever. We also acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. We acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut.



ABOUT US

A peak into the Lifewise landscape



Established doors in 1989 as The Consumer Health Awareness Network, Newfoundland and Labrador. (CHANNAL)



A leader in Peer Support across Canada.



One of the first province wide organizations created by and for individuals living with mental health and addictions issues.



Rebranded in 2022 as Lifewise, giving a fresh look to the services we offer.



Lifewise is a provincial organization created by and for individuals living with mental health and addictions issues. With almost 50 staff from St. John's to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, we strive to connect and support as many people as possible by encouraging individual recovery through self-determination and by working to break the stigma surrounding these issues in society.

● VISION

Lifewise is working towards a society where individuals living with mental health and addictions issues receive the services, supports, and tools required to live their lives free from stigma and isolation.

● MISSION

To provide hope and reduce stigma for individuals living with mental health and addictions issues. We work towards this purpose through a series of proactive and preventative services/programs designed to foster and maintain mental wellness.

WHAT WE DO



01.

PEER SUPPORT

Support through experience

02.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Reducing stigma by spreading
information

03.

POLICY CONSULTATION

Supporting change on a larger
scale

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

Secondary Stress Injury

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KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

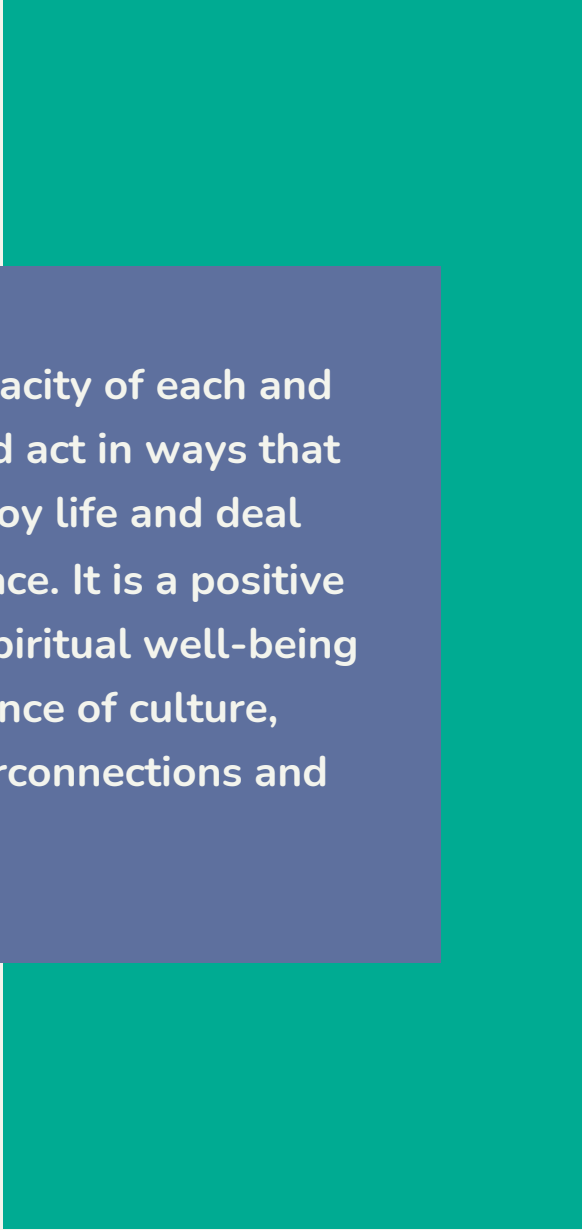
- Who We Are
- What is Mental Health
- Compassion Satisfaction
- Secondary Stress Injuries
- Prevention and Recovery
- Self-Care
- Boundaries



Comfort Contract

- Confidentiality – everything shared stays in this room.
- Listen, listen, and listen even more.
- Notice if you are talking much more than others. Give others a chance to use their voice.
- Be helpful and supportive.
- Speak personally, from the heart. Use “I” statements, speaking only for yourself.
- Replace judgement with curiosity. If you don't understand something, ask questions.
- Be respectful. Avoid interrupting.
- Respect differences.
- Everyone has the right to pass. Share only as much or as little as you are comfortable sharing.
- Everyone's participation is appreciated and valued.





Mental Health is “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014



COMPASSION SATISFACTION

The pleasure and satisfying feeling that comes from helping others.

Many people enter helping professions because of their empathetic attitudes.

Compassion satisfaction is coming home and feeling good about the work you did.

(Lightbody-Warner, 2020)

- **Compassion Fatigue**
- **Vicarious Trauma/Secondary Traumatic Stress**
- **Burnout**

Today we will look at:

- **Warning signs**
- **Prevention**
- **Recovery**

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, wavy brown hair and black-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a gold watch on her left wrist and is looking down at a laptop keyboard. The background is blurred, showing some warm, out-of-focus lights.

SECONDARY STRESS INJURIES



WHO IS AFFECTED?

- Secondary Injury can happen when a job, career, volunteer position, family role or supporting a friend puts us in situations where we regularly see or hear about suffering.
- Any role that requires people to open their hearts and minds to someone – this process of empathy is what makes supporters vulnerable to being profoundly affected.
- It is not unusual to see some of the most skilled, caring, and compassionate supporters deal with secondary stress injuries.

WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

- The deep emotional exhaustion experienced after repeat exposure to traumatic situations or stories.
- This exhaustion diminishes one's ability to feel empathy for others.
- Often described as “having nothing left to give” or “the cost of caring”.
- Vicarious Trauma and Burnout are elements of Compassion Fatigue.

WARNING SIGNS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

People who are naturally empathetic are at higher risk for developing compassion fatigue because they tend to relate to traumatic situations and stories more deeply. (Houd, 2019).

According to Clay (2020), compassion fatigue can present as:

- Feeling burnt out.
- Empathy exhaustion.
- Lack of empathy professionally and personally.
- Feeling on edge or trapped.
- Inability to separate work and personal life.

WHAT IS VICARIOUS TRAUMA?

Vicarious Trauma is the accruing effect of being exposed to someone else's trauma through listening to the person's story. This is different from PTSD, which refers to someone experiencing or witnessing trauma directly. However, the symptoms can be quite similar.

Vicarious Trauma is also referred to as Secondary Traumatic Stress.

WARNING SIGNS OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA

- Unwelcome thoughts or imagery.
- Nightmares.
- Missing work.
- Avoiding traumatic disclosure from the people you're supporting.
- Negative coping skills both personally and professionally.
- Hyperarousal to your safety and the safety of loved ones.
- Increasingly pessimistic worldview.
- Loss of motivation.
- Distancing from spiritual beliefs.
- Reduced longevity in caregiving role.
- Stress-related medical conditions.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

- Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.
- Burnout can reduce productivity and lower your motivation, causing you to feel helpless, hopeless and resentful.
- Anyone can experience career burnout, not just those who are in caregiving roles.

WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT

- Reduced performance and productivity.
- Anxiety.
- Detachment.
- Feeling listless.
- Low mood.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Lack of creativity.
- Fatigue.
- Negative attitudes towards one's coworkers or job.
- Low commitment to the role/job turnover.
- Loss of purpose.
- Absenteeism.
- Quickness to anger/frustration.
- Cynicism.
- Emotional numbness.
- Physical symptoms e.g. exhaustion, headaches, muscle tension, etc.

PREVENTION AND RECOVERY FROM SECONDARY STRESS INJURIES

- Educate yourself about compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout.
- Practice self-care and positive coping strategies. For example, deep breathing, watching a funny movie, etc.
- Set emotional boundaries to remain compassionate without taking on the pain of the other person.
- Engage in outside hobbies. Cultivate healthy friendships outside of work/volunteering/ caregiving.
- Keep a journal.
- Identify workplace strategies. For example, work-life balance, regular breaks, routine check-ins, mental health days, etc.
- Speak with a counselor.

- Make self-care part of your routine.
- Examine your beliefs about self-care. Remember that self-care recharges our batteries and replenishes the energy we need to help others.
- Practice self-compassion and reduce the pressure to be perfect. Practice gratitude.
- Create community. Connect with colleagues and other caregivers for support.
- Focus on developing compassion satisfaction and reconnecting with why you wanted to be a helper.

SELF-CARE



THE BIG 5 OF SELF-CARE

Socializing

Relaxation

Nutrition

Sleep

Movement

SETTING COMPASSIONATE BOUNDARIES



- Differentiating between compassion and empathy.
- Letting go of “should.” For example, taking a break when you’re feeling drained, or not comparing yourself to others.
- Remember that it’s okay to say no and take care of your own needs.
- Letting go of the other person’s response to your boundary.
- Leaning into generosity, not obligation.
- Decide where it’s important to place your energy.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

Aspens and Oaks

Caregiver Support Network

Central Intake

Child Protective Services

Lifewise

Choices for Youth

Emmanuel House

RUA Counseling Center

Key Assets

John Howard Society

LeMarchant House

Morgentaler Clinic

MUN Counseling Centre

NL AIDS Committee

Pain and Disability Management

Opioid Treatment Clinic (Methadone)

Pastoral Care

Credit Counseling Service NL

Recovery Centre

Safe Works Access Program (SWAP)

SA Correctional and Justice Services

St. John's Status of Women

Street Reach

Turnings

Victim Services

Waypoints



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

THANK YOU

Any
Questions



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