



## **Sugati Publications Product 11--Booklet**

### **Coping with Trauma Work and Vicarious Trauma (37 pages)**

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## ***Coping with Trauma Work and Vicarious Trauma***

*A guide for professionals and volunteers who work with victims*

*This resource is intended for professionals and volunteers who work with victims of trauma, crime, abuse and natural disasters. The booklet offers information about the effects and impact of trauma work including vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress, as well as suggestions for service providers on coping with this difficult work. Also included is an extensive list of recommended resources for more information on this topic.*

*Persons in the helping professions are very likely to be affected by vicarious trauma at some point in their careers. One reason for this vulnerability is due to the increased sensitivity and the empathic relationship with the patient which is required in these professions. This booklet can serve as a helpful resource for professionals and volunteers who work with trauma victims. It is not intended to be a substitute for medical, psychological or legal advice. Professional consultation should be sought for specific medical, psychological or legal advice.*

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## Excerpts from the booklets

### **Who can be affected by vicarious trauma?**

*Any helping professional, direct service provider, volunteer or first-line responder can be affected by repeated, secondhand exposure to trauma or by a single incident of bearing witness to a traumatic event (e.g., events of September 11, 2001). Persons who are at risk of vicarious trauma include direct care providers in the mental health and healthcare fields, such as social workers, counselors, psychologists, physicians, nurses, children's service workers, victim advocates, law enforcement and emergency responders. Disaster workers may be at particularly high risk due to the unexpected and large-scale nature of these traumatic events (Pulido, 2007).*

### **Introduction**

*This resource is intended for helping professionals and volunteers whose lives have been affected by working with trauma victims--either in the immediate aftermath of the trauma, or in the weeks, months or years after exposure to traumatic material.*

*Anyone who provides services to trauma survivors will likely experience the impact of exposure to the personal and sometimes graphic accounts from trauma victims about their experiences. It is the very nature of this work and the need for sensitivity and compassion which increases our vulnerability as helping professionals. Feeling affected by this work is normal. It is a natural outcome of bearing witness to another's trauma. As McCann and Pearlman noted in 1989 in their publication on this topic, "vicarious trauma is inevitable."*

*In this booklet, we have incorporated a broader look at vicarious trauma to include a range of perspectives on how trauma work affects helping professionals, emergency responders and other service providers. We have integrated information about compassion fatigue, post traumatic stress disorder and burnout to provide a more complete picture about the potential impact and implications of trauma work.*

*This booklet addresses the personal and professional impact of providing direct services to adults or children who have experienced a traumatic event. This includes persons who have been traumatized by combat, sexual assault, domestic violence, natural disasters, accidents, terrorist events, violent crime or as a witness to the murder or abuse of another person. It also includes information on recognizing the indicators of vicarious trauma and how to cope with vicarious trauma.*

*This booklet can be a helpful resource for anyone whose life or work has been affected by working with victims of any type of trauma. It also serves as an aid to understanding vicarious trauma and learning from the experiences of others, as well as a resource for further information and support. We'll begin with defining vicarious trauma from a broader perspective including how it relates to burnout, compassion fatigue and other potential effects of doing trauma work.*

