



Self-care Booklet

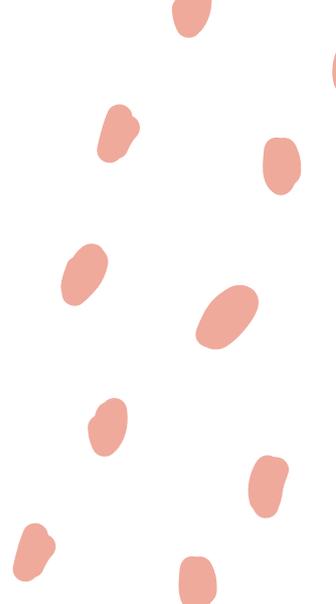
Vicarious Trauma





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About This Booklet

When working with survivors of trauma, their lived experience may cause a 'ripple effect' on professionals that work with them, also known as vicarious trauma.

This information booklet aims to complement current trauma-informed resources by educating Western Australian lawyers on vicarious trauma and promoting self-care and wellbeing.

The **ABC** Approach was used as a guide to create this resource: being **Aware** of what affects our wellbeing, finding **Balance** in our lifestyle and **Connecting** to positive and affirmative supports around us.



What affects your wellbeing

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Vicarious trauma is the indirect exposure to other people's traumatic experiences. It has the same harmful effects on our mental health as experiencing trauma directly.



COMPASSION FATIGUE

The emotional and/or physical exhaustion that results in a depleted ability to empathise or relate to others.



BURNOUT

A form of exhaustion caused by feeling constantly stimulated, overwhelmed or overworked.

CAUSES AND CONTRIBUTORS OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA



Frequent exposure to graphic information



Poor work-life boundaries



Insufficient trauma-related training



Stigma and inability to debrief on emotional issues

SIGNS OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA



BEHAVIOURAL

Anger or irritability
Neglecting relationships
Substance use/abuse



PHYSICAL

Exhaustion
Sleep Disturbances
Unexplained pain or illness



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Lowered self-esteem
Change in values, beliefs or attitudes
Mental health challenges

How are you feeling?

This checklist aims to infer the amount of distress you currently experience in your work. It is solely for educational purposes and is not meant to diagnose or treat any psychological disorders.

Using the scale below, indicate how these statements apply to you.

5 = Very often; 4 = Often; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Occasionally; 1 = Seldom; 0 = Rarely

- #1 I am not happy and content with my work life.
- #2 I feel drained and exhausted from “giving” so much.
- #3 I am preoccupied with the traumatised stories I have heard.
- #4 I feel apathetic about work.
- #5 I feel down after working with those I help.
- #6 I think about traumatic experiences of a person I help too much.
- #7 I feel trapped by my work.
- #8 Because of my work I have been on edge.
- #9 I avoid certain situations because it reminds me of my clients' experiences.
- #10 I don't like my work anymore.
- #11 Because of my work I am exhausted.
- #12 I have intrusive thoughts of stories I've heard from those I'm helping.
- #13 I feel overwhelmed with the amount of work I have to do.
- #14 I wonder if I make a difference through my work.
- #15 I have flashbacks connected to my client.
- #16 I feel like I work too hard.
- #17 I become overwhelmed when thinking about working with certain clients.
- #18 I have troubling thoughts about events of a client when I'm not working.
- #19 I feel I'm working more for money than for personal fulfillment.
- #20 I have felt trapped by my professional responsibilities.
- #21 I have involuntarily recalled my own traumatic experience while working with a client.



Write your score for each question, then total them in the blanks below.

Burnout

- #1
 - #4
 - #7
 - #10
 - #13
 - #16
 - #19
- Total: _____

Compassion Fatigue

- #2
 - #5
 - #8
 - #11
 - #14
 - #17
 - #20
- Total: _____

Vicarious Trauma

- #3
 - #6
 - #9
 - #12
 - #15
 - #18
 - #21
- Total: _____

Cut-off scores
 0-14: Low Risk
 15-21: Moderate Risk
 22-28: High Risk
 29-35: Extremely High Risk

The Ripple Effect of Trauma

Secondary traumatic stress, or vicarious trauma, is often experienced by professionals when working with survivors of trauma. This causes 'ripples' that can affect those around us.



Why does this matter?

Managing the ripple effect on your wellbeing is crucial for the longevity of your career and overall health. Below are some key wellbeing statistics for legal professionals.



1 in 3 believe that their work negatively impacts their wellbeing



24% feel that their employer does not sufficiently recognise mental wellbeing issues



63-85% personally experienced or knew a colleague who experienced depression or anxiety

Self-care Wheel

Self-care is essential to manage your health. Try using the self-care wheel below to identify your overall wellbeing needs to restore some work-life balance.

Professional

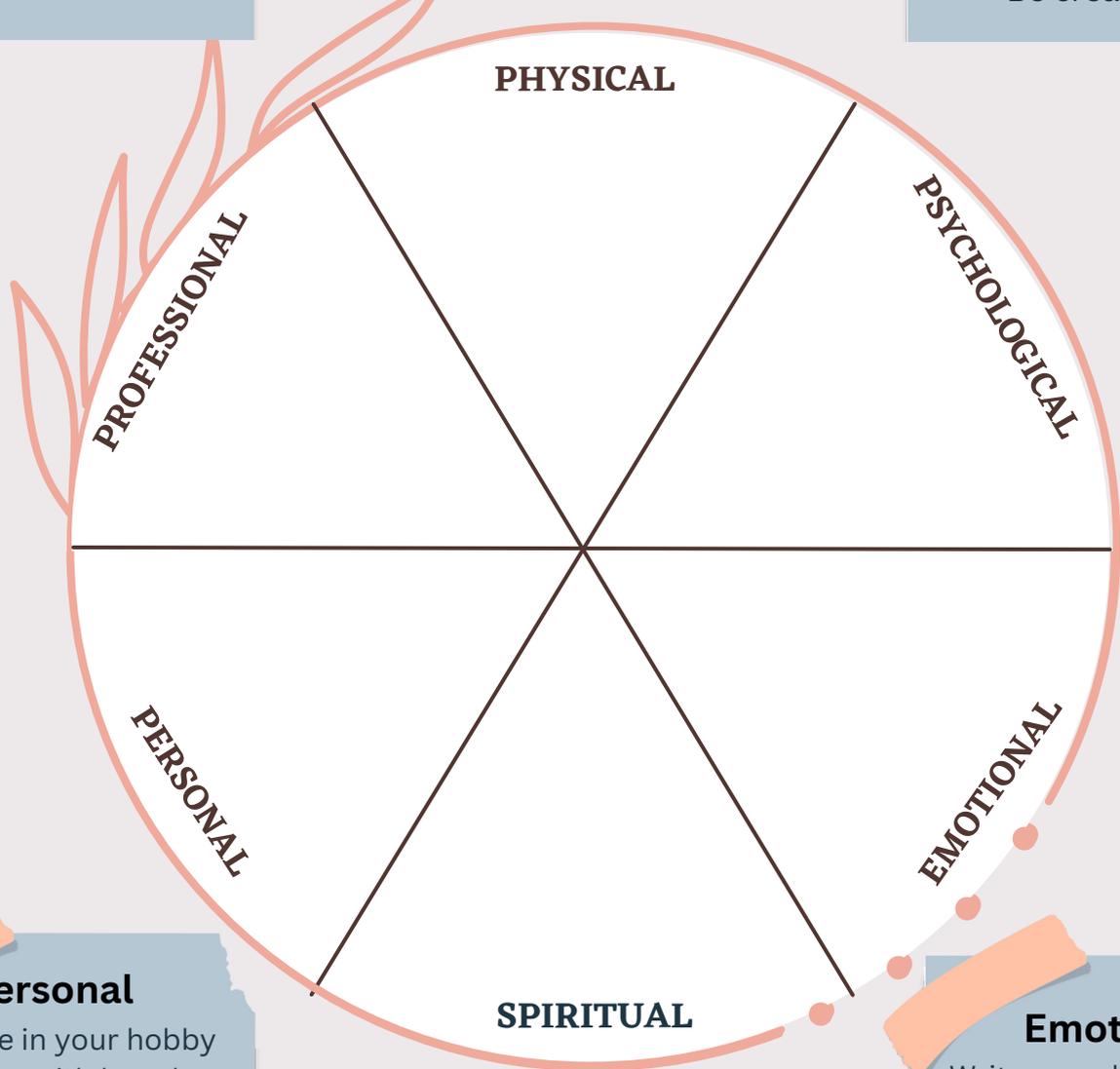
- Take breaks
- Set work-life boundaries
- Learn to say no

Physical

- Healthy eating
- Regular sleep
- Go for a walk

Psychological

- Meditation
- Journaling
- Be creative



Personal

- Indulge in your hobby
- Spend time with loved ones
- Plan a day out or holiday

Spiritual

- Practice mindfulness
- Enjoy nature
- Be involved with your community

Emotional

- Write a card to someone
- Cuddle your pet
- Compliment yourself or someone else

Spiritual

- Practice mindfulness
- Enjoy nature
- Be involved with your community

Speak to Someone

Your first point of contact can be your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for employees, if available to you; however, there are external organisations that can support you in other ways.



<https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>
Online Therapy Option
Free online and telephone support for 12-25yrs
(9am-1am AEST) 1800 650 890



Lighthouse Counselling & Therapy WA
<https://lighthousecounsellingtherapywa.com.au/>
Online Therapy Option
Free 10 minute phone conversation
4 Dumant Lane, Canning Vale, WA 6155
+61 431 302 633



Support for Lawyers

<https://supportforlawyers.com/>
Online and Confidential
hello@supportforlawyers.com
Book online
\$385 initial consultation (90 minutes)
\$385 per individual session

Helplines

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636 (24/7)

Lifeline – 13 11 14 (24/7)

Blue Knot Foundation – 1300 657 380 (9am-5pm AEST Mon-Sun)

SANE Australia – 1800 18 7263 (10am-10pm AEST Mon-Fri)

Head to Head – 1800 595 212 (8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri)

Educate Yourself



<https://humanconnections.com.au/>
80 minutes free Accidental Counsellor
Training Short Course
info@humanconnections.com.au



<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/>
+61 3 9035 5599

- Psychological First Aid Training (\$220)
 - Self paced online 4 hours
- Trauma informed care Training (\$275)
 - Self paced online 5 hours
- Vicarious Trauma Training (\$220)
 - Self paced online 4 hours



<https://helpingminds.org.au/>
info@helpingminds.org.au
08 9427 7100

Mental Health First Aid Course
(Self-Paced Online + Instructor led video conferencing)

EVOLVE

<https://evolvewa.com.au/>
08 6117 5520

Vicarious Trauma Course – The Ripple Effect

- Individual & Group Bookings
- Trauma Informed Practice (\$145 – \$315)
- Mental Health First Aid (\$250 – \$540)

Trauma-informed lawyering

Law Access is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates pro-bono legal assistance to Western Australians who cannot afford a lawyer. The organisation has also developed free and online trauma-informed resources for lawyers working with marginalised groups.

[Click here](#) to access Law Access trauma-related resources including:

- Two short videos: "What is trauma?" and "Trauma-informed lawyering."
- A short webinar on trauma-informed practice delivered by Sophie Taylor.
- A self-care booklet on vicarious trauma, designed specifically for lawyers dealing with vulnerable clients.

Thank you to all the contributors to these fantastic resources.

www.lawaccess.org.au

Further Resources

Australian Association of Social Workers

<https://www.aasw.asn.au/events/event/introduction-to-trauma-informed-practice-and-self-care>

Provide CPD training, including trauma-informed practice and self-care.

Australian Psychologist Society

<https://psychology.org.au/>

Information on trauma, vicarious trauma and trauma informed care (not lawyer focus) | Find a psychologist (contact).

Blue Knot Training

<https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/professional-development-training/training-programs/>

Training for Trauma Informed Care for person who involved in serving clients in need.

Government of Western Australia North Metropolitan Health Service King Edward Memorial Hospital

<https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/Other-Services/SARC>

Sexual Assault Resource Centre (for clients), information on Trauma.

Mental Health Coordinating Council

<https://mhcc.org.au/training/courses/?search=trauma&course-type>

Resources and training for Trauma Informed Care for person who involved in serving clients in need.

National Disability Services

<https://www.nds.org.au/zero-tolerance-framework/considering-additional-risk>
Resources and recorded webinars of risks associated with vulnerable clients.

The Law Society of Western Australia

<https://www.lawsocietywa.asn.au/events-overview/>

CPD training, including avoiding burnout and understanding vicarious trauma.

TRAUMAINFORMED

<https://www.traumapolicy.org/topics/trauma-informed-care>

Information about Trauma-Informed Care, principles and resources.

Western Australian Association for Mental Health

<https://waamh.org.au/sector-development-and-training/online-learning-hub>

A list of online training and resources.

Mental Health Australia

Need Help? | Mental Health Australia (mhaustralia.org)

Life Supports Counselling

Trauma Counselling | Life Supports Counselling

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Thank You



This booklet was produced for lawyers by students at the University of Western Australia via the McCusker Centre for Citizenship. We would like to thank Law Access for collaborating and guiding us through the process of creating this information booklet, and hope that it will benefit the wider legal community.



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