

# Factors that increase our vulnerability

Personal history/ Therapy	Personality/ Defensive style	Coping style	Current life context	Training & career history	Supervision	Nature of clientele	Nature of work & workplace
<p>Personal history of trauma</p> <p>Unresolved issues from own history of trauma signal areas of increased vulnerability</p> <p>Inability to discuss the impact of trauma history with supervisor</p> <p>Therapy not financially supported or positively encouraged in workplace</p> <p>Fear of being judged if disclose history</p>	<p>Personal value for stoicism over expressiveness</p> <p>Belief that it is unprofessional to talk about the impact of this work</p> <p>Belief, especially by experienced workers, that their work should no longer have an impact on them</p> <p>Apprehension of newer workers to discuss their reactions to this work, especially when they do not see veteran staff talking about it</p>	<p>Individuals whose natural coping style does not include expression of feelings</p> <p>Individuals who do not normally practice positive self-care strategies when experience stress</p> <p>Individuals who do not take time out for themselves</p> <p>Individuals who tend to isolate, numb their feelings or have addictions</p>	<p>Negative events or stressful circumstances in life outside of work</p> <p>Major life changes (such as moving, getting married, having a child, etc.)</p> <p>Additional professional sources of stress (such as a second job or taking graduate coursework)</p> <p>Individuals who are new to their position, place of employment or the field in general</p>	<p>Individuals who feel unprepared to be doing their current job</p> <p>Ongoing training and education not financially supported or positively encouraged in the workplace</p> <p>Educational level attained is not higher than a Bachelor's degree</p> <p>Individuals with minimal previous experience working with traumatized individuals</p>	<p>Poor, absent, inconsistent or unsupportive supervision</p> <p>Assumption by supervisors or supervisees that veteran staff no longer need guidance or support</p> <p>The absence of supervision for new staff who require supervision to help them gain skills and feel more competent</p>	<p>Multiple problems and limited resources</p> <p>Horrendous details of violence</p> <p>In crisis from a recent trauma</p> <p>Children and adolescents</p> <p>Clients with difficult interpersonal styles</p> <p>Clients with idealized or intense negative expectations of helpers</p> <p>Clients who feel self-hatred, have chronic suicidal wishes, and/or engage in self-destructive behaviors</p> <p>Current safety dangers</p>	<p>Strict hierarchy</p> <p>Direct staff without influence in decision-making</p> <p>Absence of clear guidelines</p> <p>Inflexibility with individual cases</p> <p>Current policies interfere with ability to do what is best for clients</p> <p>Insufficient vacation time</p> <p>Denial of clients' trauma or the impact on staff</p> <p>Potential for physical injury from clients</p> <p>Insufficient resources</p>

Adapted from: Pearlman, L.A. & Saakvitne, K.W. (1996). Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.