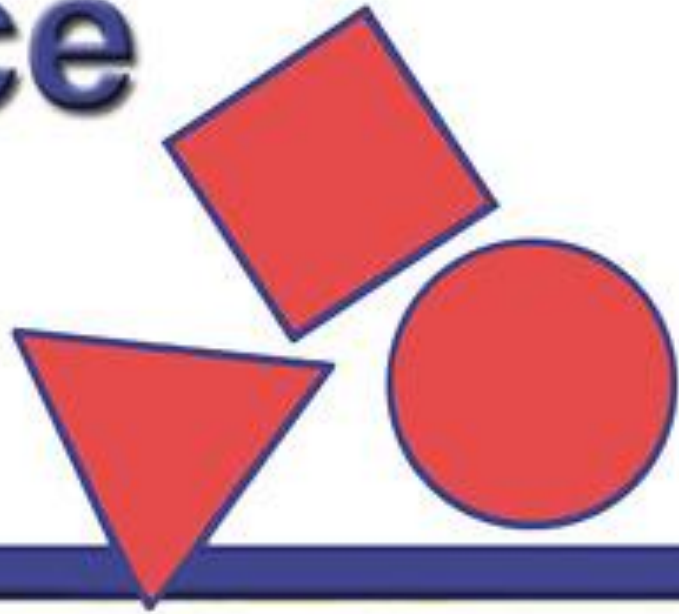


# **Standing Strong Together**

Addressing Vicarious Trauma in  
Rural Rape Crisis Work

# Resource Sharing Project



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# Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify and understand the particularities of vicarious trauma for rural advocates.
- Participants will be able to create strategies for building personal resiliency in their rural practice.
- Participants will be able to describe the organizational commitment necessary to support and maintain healthy rural advocates.

# VT & Rape Crisis Work

“Workers in rape-crisis programs experience a range of complex emotional, spiritual, and physical reactions to their jobs. Rape crisis work is more than a job; it affects workers’ personal relationships, view of the world, and perceptions of safety and vulnerability as women.”

# Vicarious Trauma

- Vicarious
  - the experience of another human being affects your own self
- Trauma
  - the reaction/experience of the worker is specifically related to the trauma experienced by another
  - the reaction is similar to the trauma response of survivors

# Vicarious Trauma

- One outcome of working with survivors of violence
- Effects are cumulative and build upon memories obtained through listening to the experiences of survivors

(Richardson, 2001)

WHAT DOES VICARIOUS TRAUMA  
LOOK LIKE?

# Vicarious Trauma

- Creates a permanent, subtle or marked change in the personal, political, spiritual, and professional outlook of the advocate
- Affects the advocate's view of the world and their relationships and connections to family, friends, and community

(Richardson, 2001)



# Burnout



- Describes a severe state of exhaustion or lack of energy, that is usually brought on by unreasonable work expectations or environmental work related stress.

WHERE DOES VICARIOUS TRAUMA COME FROM?

WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR RURAL  
ADVOCATES?

# Rural Vicarious Trauma

- Everybody knows everybody
- Fewer resources and colleagues
- More isolation
- Complex trauma and needs

# Vicarious Resilience

- What lessons of strength and hope can we learn from the survivors we serve?
- When have you seen your community come together to do something great?



“Taking care of ourselves while taking care of others allows us to contribute to our society with such impact that we will leave a legacy informed by our deepest wisdom and greatest gifts instead of burdened with our struggles and despairs.”

(van Dernoot Lipsky, 2009)

# Areas of Personal Impact





# Reframing

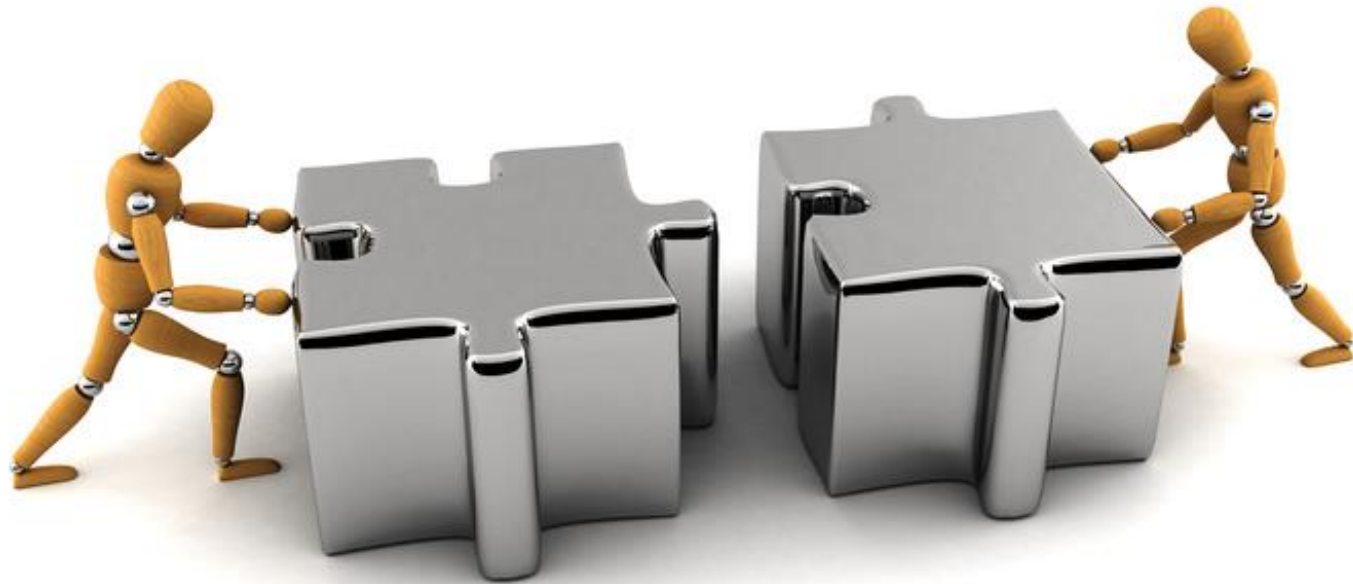




**Activism**

**Fun**





**Know your place in the work**

# Boundaries



**Actually practice self-care**



WHAT ARE SOME  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRATEGIES?





**Supportive Leadership**

# Strong Ethics and Shared Vision







# Training



**Standing  
Together**

# Make Safe Spaces



# Empowerment



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