



DIGITAL DIALOGUE

WORKFORCE SUPPORT



# *Supporting Child Welfare Staff: The Critical First 3 Months*



# Speakers

*Join the National  
Conversation  
on Child Abuse  
and Neglect*



GUEST

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MODERATOR

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# Trauma-informed Guidelines for Organizations

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## Secondary Traumatic Stress in Child Welfare Practice: Trauma-Informed Guidelines for Organizations

By

The Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Dissemination and Implementation Project

December 2016

Includes:

- Hiring
- The first 3 months
- Cumulative effects
- Critical incidents
- Evaluation

# Hiring Phase

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An opportunity to engage potential new workers and define the realities of the job and organizational supports

- “Duty to warn”
- Application process
  - Supplemental questions specific to secondary traumatic stress (STS)
- Prior to interview
  - Requested to view “realistic job preview”
- Interview
  - Questions/discussion specific to STS

# Hiring Phase (continued)

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## Additional points:

- Emphasize that “the work is not done alone” and identify the points of support.
- Reiterate the realities of job, and ask how they will handle these.
- Convey a culture of affirmation and caring.
- Provide in-depth information regarding supervision/critical debriefing protocols and supports available like EAP, wellness plans, and peer support groups.

# The Critical First 3 Months

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- Preparing for the first day
- Orienting new staff to a trauma-exposed work environment
- Supporting an employee through their first 3 months

# Preparing for the First Day

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- Assess the current climate and culture in the organization.
- Identify workforce champions.
- Prepare a welcome and wellness packet.



# Orienting to the Work Environment

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- Introduce STS and other concepts used when a workforce is exposed to trauma:
  - STS: Signs and symptoms
  - Compassion satisfaction
  - Emotional resilience
  - Primary trauma
- Highlight the importance of enhancing physical and psychological safety.



# Support During the First 3 Months

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- Incorporate new employees into the team.
- Provide education and awareness.
- Monitor workload assignments.
- Provide trauma-informed supervision.
  - Reinforce normalcy and the expectation that—
    - The work will elicit strong emotional response,  
AND
    - The new worker needs to share these struggles with  
supervisor/peers.

# Beyond the First 3 Months

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Key elements in supporting staff on an ongoing basis include:

- Individual assessment
- Building resiliency
- Support systems (includes professional development and supervision)
- Coverage and caseloads
- Empowerment and advocacy
- Involving employees in decision making process
- Recognition, team building, and peer support

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# Additional Resources

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- Realistic Job Previews  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/learningcenter/video-series/rjp/>
- Multi-Dimensional Human Services Workplace Stress micro-presentation  
<http://cantasd.org/explore-topics/secondary-traumatic-stress/>
- Virtual Expo session: *Restore, Refresh and Re-energize: Organizational Responses to Secondary Traumatic Stress*, available through [capLEARN](#)
- Child Welfare Information Gateway  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/trauma/secondary/>
- National Child Welfare Workforce Institute  
<https://www.ncwwi.org/>

# *Thank You* and Next Steps

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- Download the handouts to learn more. Click on the files in the “Handouts” box on your screen.
- Do you have innovative ideas, questions, or concerns about workforce support? Tell us about your work. Send an e-mail to **hello@CANTASD.org** with “Workforce Support” in the subject line.

# Participant Feedback

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Thank you for your participation!

How useful was this session?

**Additional Comments:** [hello@cblcc.acf.hhs.gov](mailto:hello@cblcc.acf.hhs.gov)

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