

OVC's Vicarious Trauma Toolkit: A Blueprint for Responding to Vicarious Trauma and Promoting Resilience

District of Columbia Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants

August 20, 2021

11:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.



WebEx Orientation

- Mute
- Chat Features
- Raising Hand
- Question Follow-Up
- Technical Assistance/Help



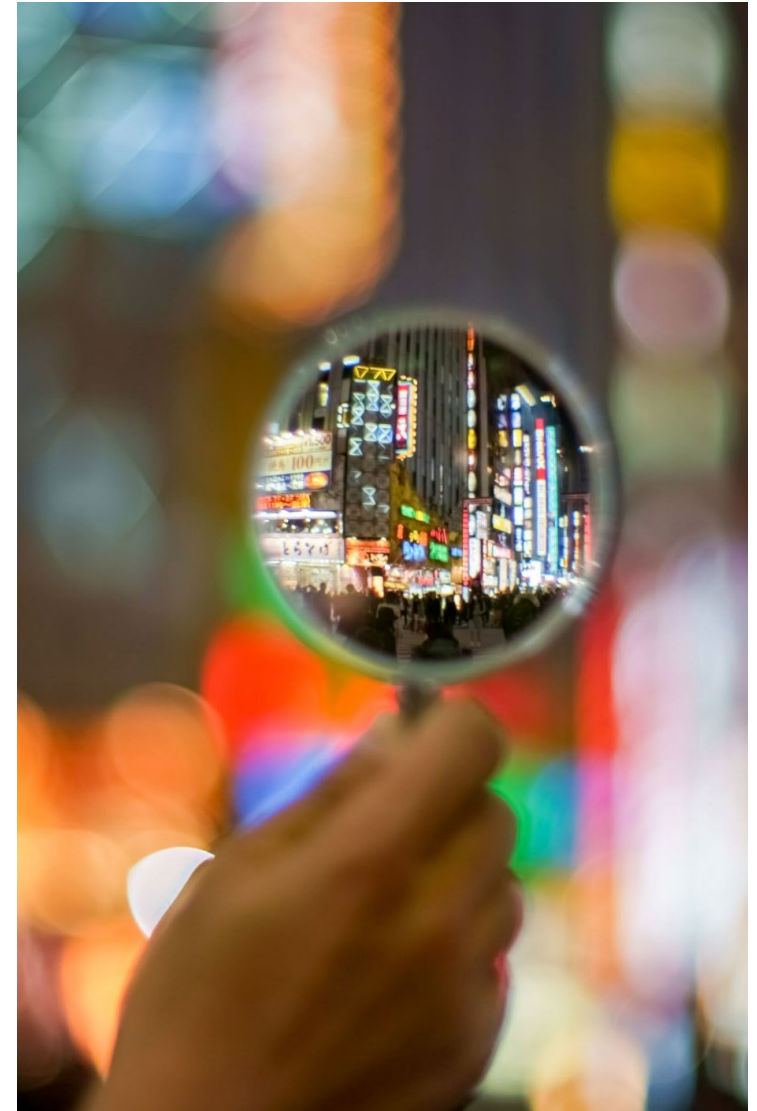
Welcome

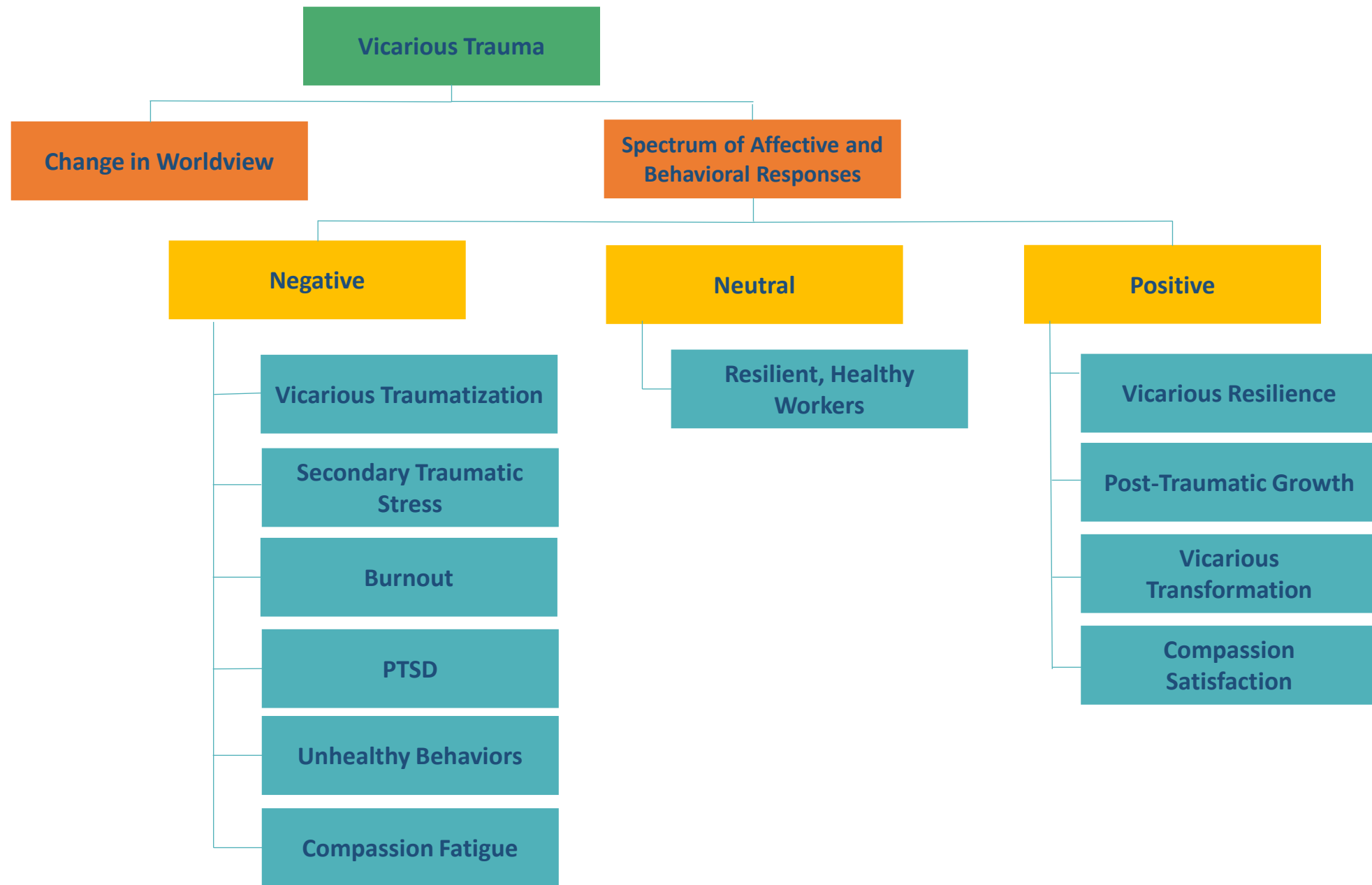
- Victoria Shelton
- Kathleen Demro



Monday's Webinar- A Quick Recap

- Definitions and spectrum of responses to vicarious trauma
- ABCs of VT focused strategies
- Personal and Professional Risk Factors
- Core elements of resiliency and factors that support resiliency





Learning Objectives

Describe

Describe two organizational strategies that help mitigate the impact of vicarious trauma.

Discuss

Discuss two ways agency leadership can support staff by anticipating and responding to staff members' response to work-related trauma.

Identify

Identify two resources to support implementation of vicarious trauma-informed approaches.

Organizational Effects of Vicarious Trauma



Organizational Effects of Vicarious Trauma

Lost productivity stems from—

- Low staff morale.
- Blocked lines of communication.
- Lack of collaboration and cohesion.



Organizational Effects of Vicarious Trauma

Staff turnover can lead to

- Additional stress on staff
- Limited time and resources



Organizational Effects of Vicarious Trauma

Poor organizational health is caused by the erosion of—

- Concentration.
- Focus.
- Decisionmaking.
- Motivation.
- Performance



External Factors



Poll time-What are some ways that your agency/organization currently responds to work-related trauma exposure?



A Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

1. Recognizes that vicarious trauma is an occupational challenge and has potential negative consequences

2. Proactively addresses this impact through policies, procedures, practices, and programs



Office for Victims of Crime
OVC

The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

- Launched in 2017
- Pilot sites and multidisciplinary collaboration
- Provides a process to support increased organizational VT responses
- Developed for a range of first responder disciplines

Victim Services



EMS



Fire Services



Law Enforcement



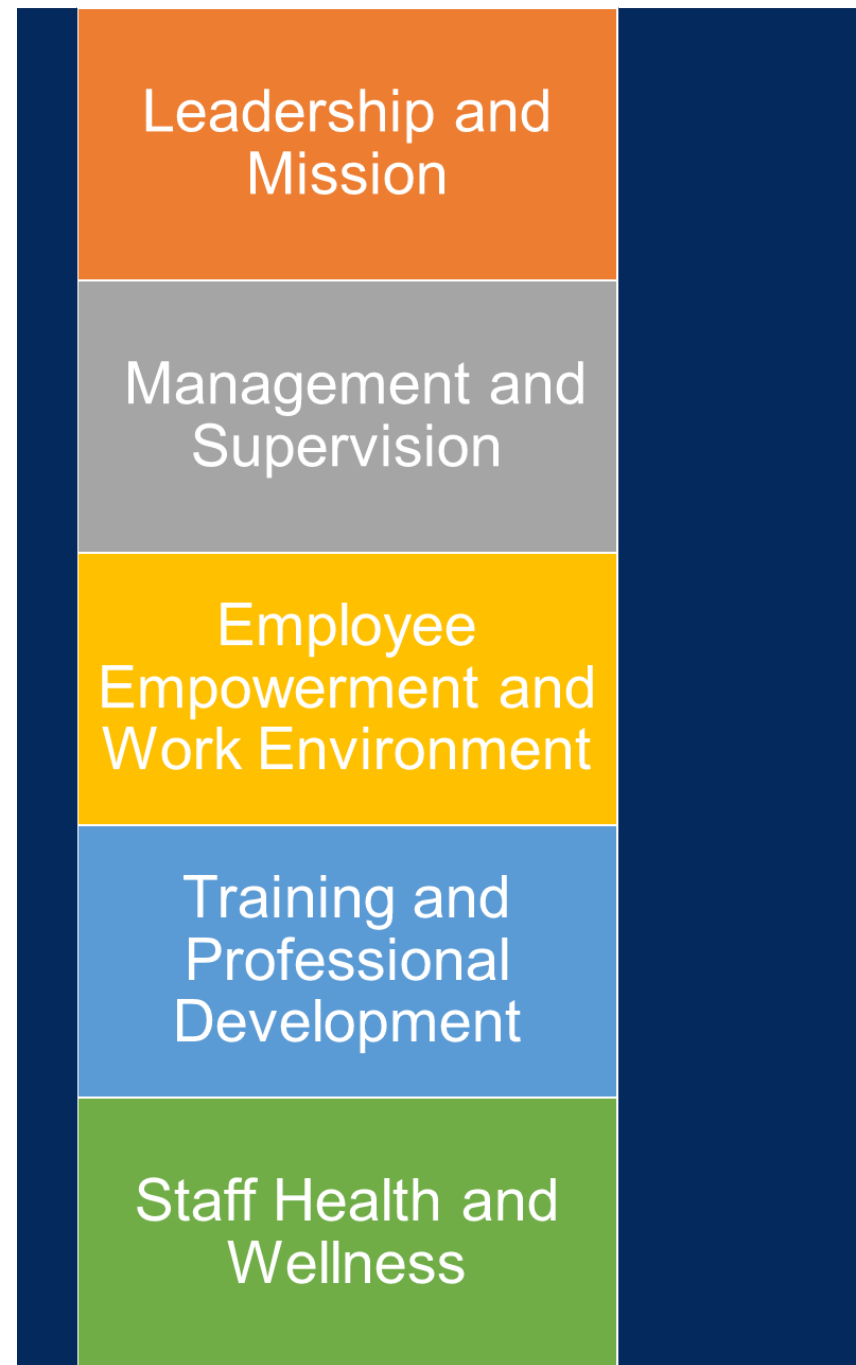


Concept of the VTT

- What we pay attention to, grows...
- Pro-active use of organizational strategies provides a path to become vicarious trauma-informed



Five Organizational Strategies (Pillars) of Healthy, Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organizations



Pillars of Healthy, Vicarious Trauma- Informed Organizations



Leadership and Mission

- Integrate strategies into values, operations, and practices.
- Maintain a clear vision that supports the mission.
- Promote and model respectful communication.

Strategies That Support a Healthy, Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

Leadership and Mission



“We work with individual staff to determine what works best for them, as it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Our staff tells us what is helpful to them, a waste of time, appreciated, what makes them uncomfortable. Then we work out an individual stress reduction plan for that staff. With leadership respecting the needs of our staff, we have maintained a surprisingly low rate of staff turnover.”

Pillars of Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organizations



Management and Supervision

- Foster supportive relationships.
- Promote policies and procedures that lessen negative impact.
- Seek out and support staff.
- Conduct performance evaluations that discuss vicarious trauma.

Strategies That
Support a Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organization

Management and Supervision



- Create a safe space for addressing vicarious trauma
- Use a standard protocol to debrief after a high-stress incident.

Pillars of Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organizations



Employee Empowerment and Work Environment

- Foster teamwork.
- Encourage feedback and collaboration.
- Create formal and informal opportunities for connection.
- Diversify job tasks.



Employee Empowerment and Work Environment

Strategies That
Support a Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organization

- Peer support or peer to peer coaching
- Opportunities for substantive consensual decision-making

Pillars of Healthy, Vicarious Trauma- Informed Organizations



Training and Professional Development

- Promote continuing education, professional development, and networking opportunities.
- Provide thorough orientation and ongoing learning opportunities.
- Enable access to learning resources.

Strategies That
Support a Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organization

Training and Professional Development



“Regular, ongoing training improves staff confidence in their job duties while decreasing their feelings of vulnerability to the effects of the work.”
—Therapist/Trainer, Victim Services

- Actively promote learning new techniques and approaches to support self-care and resilience, such as Low Impact Debriefing (www.tendacademy.ca)
- Models’ trauma-informed practices around the use of images and videos

Pillars of Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organizations



Staff Health and Wellness

- Devote time and resources to promoting staff well-being.
- Encourage and provide health and wellness activities.
- Incorporate wellness into policies and practices.

Strategies That
Support a Healthy,
Vicarious Trauma-
Informed
Organization

Staff Health and Wellness

- Flexibility in work schedules
- Mental health days
- Support healthy boundaries between work and home

Chat Check In

After the general overview of the organizational strategies, have you identified some additional ways that your agency/organization might promote and support resiliency of your team/s?



The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

BLUEPRINT FOR A VICARIOUS TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATION

Where Do We Begin?

Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization [↗](#)

Much like building a house, an organizational response to vicarious trauma requires vision, commitment, and a methodical approach that starts with laying a foundation and then builds up from there. This blueprint, informed by research and lessons learned from the field, was created as a step-by-step guide to assist organizations in becoming more vicarious trauma-informed. It provides guidance on using the [Vicarious Trauma—Organizational Readiness Guide](#) (VT-ORG) to assess your organization's current capacity as a vicarious trauma-informed organization, and offers suggestions on how to use the free, online repository of policies, research, and websites in the [Compendium of Resources](#), including the [New Tools for the Field](#), created specifically for the VTT.

Introduction

Message From the Director

About the Toolkit

Where Do We Begin?

The VT-ORG and
Compendium

What is the VT-ORG?

What is the Compendium?

Compendium of Resources

Tools for Victim Services

Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

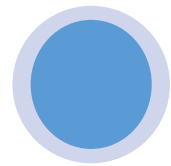
Step 1: Lay the foundation for success.

Step 3: Determine priorities and develop an action plan.

Step 2: Assess current organizational capacity for addressing vicarious trauma.

Step 4: Explore the VTT for resources to implement your action plan.

Step 1: Lay the Foundation for Success



Getting Buy in and Getting Organized

- Obtain commitment to establish an organizational response.
- Designate an individual or team to coordinate and guide the effort.
- Encourage open communication with staff.

Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

Step 1: Lay the Foundation for Success

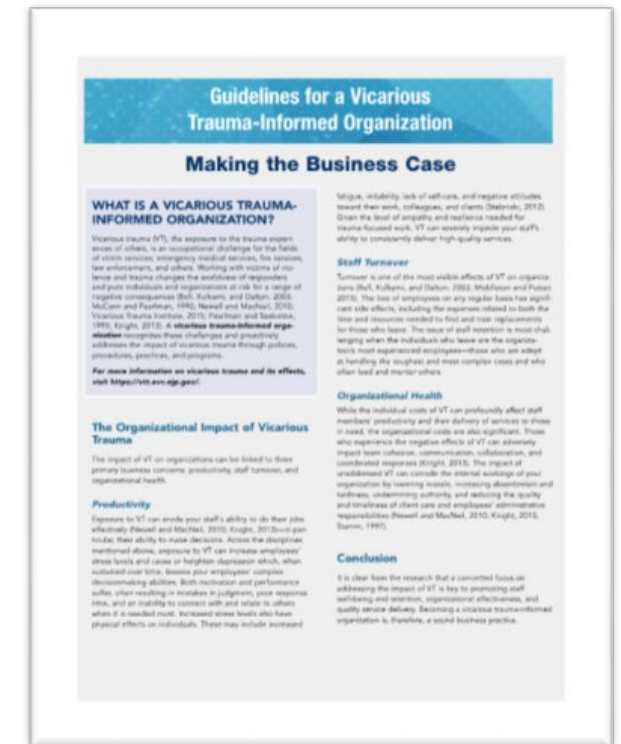
Obtain commitment to establish an organizational response.

Tasks

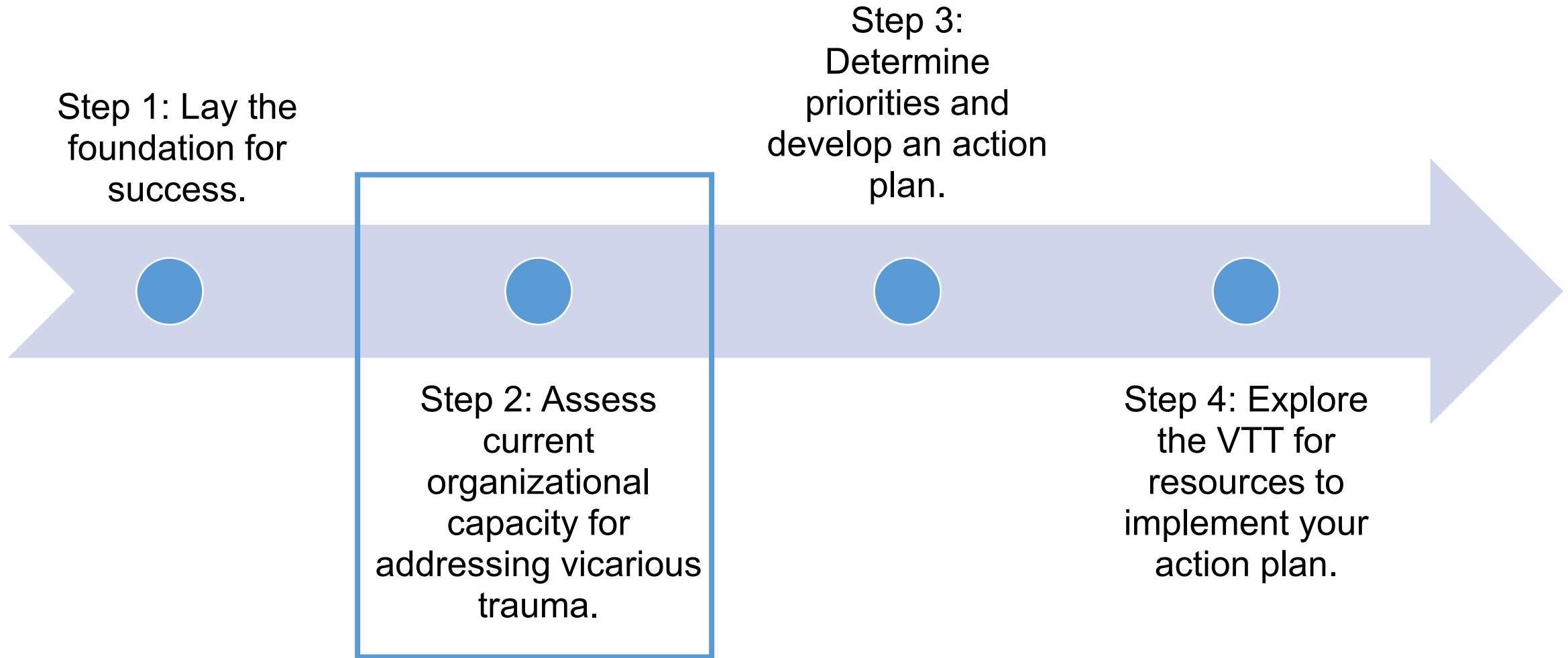
- Gather leaders.
- Discuss “why” you should have an organizational response.
- Evaluate the benefits of using the VTT as your approach.
- Show the video and see what your peers are saying.

VTT Tools

- Making the Business Case
- Talking Points: Using the VTT to Address Vicarious Trauma
- Victim Services Video Testimonial

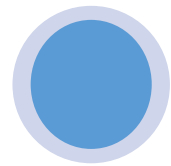


Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization



Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

Step 2: Assess current organizational capacity for addressing vicarious trauma



Introducing the VT-ORG

- Create a realistic timeline to maintain momentum
- Conduct the VT-ORG Assessment
- Determine current capacity as a VT informed organization
- Prepare a report of the VT-ORG findings and consider sharing with staff along with information about next steps.

Poll time



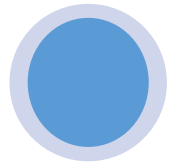
Staff Health and Wellness

To maintain the health and wellness of their staff, vicarious trauma-informed organizations recognize links between health/wellness and staff satisfaction and productivity; devote time and resources to promoting staff well-being; encourage and provide health and wellness activities; and incorporate wellness into policies and practices.

In answering the following questions, consider the past 6 months in your organization.	1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Some- times	4 = Often	5 = Always	N/A
1. During the hiring and orientation of new staff, supervisors demonstrate their understanding of the risk for vicarious trauma and the importance of both individual and organizational strategies to address it by—						
a. asking final job applicants to articulate their own coping strategies;						
b. making final applicants aware of the organization’s strategies to reduce the negative impact of the work.						
2. My organization offers services that support individual staff members (e.g., employee assistance program, chaplain services, mental health providers).						
3. My organization provides opportunities for peers to support one another.						
4. My organization conducts exit interviews that include questions related to vicarious trauma and the organization’s response.						
5. Differentiation between work and non-work hours is recognized and respected.						

Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

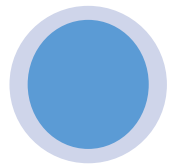
Step 3: Determine Priorities and Develop your action plan



Using the results to inform next steps

- Identify gaps and strengths
- Determine action plan priorities
- Create action plan
- Share action plan with staff
- Evaluate

Step 4: Explore the VTT for Resources to Support Planning and Implementation



Introducing the Compendium of Resources

- Check out the 4-minute video on OVC TTAC's VTT webpage for tips and tricks on using filters to find resources via type, strategy, discipline, topic, and CDC code that will work for your agency.
- Guideline “tip sheets” for human resources, supervisors, family members, peer to peer support.

Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization

From the Compendium of Resources:

LOW IMPACT DEBRIEFING:
Four steps to protect yourself from being slimed, and to help minimize the risk of traumatizing your colleagues, friends and family.

- **SELF AWARENESS**
Be aware of the stories you tell and the level of detail you provide when telling a story. Are all the details really necessary? Can you give an abbreviated version?
- **FAIR WARNING**
Allow your listener to prepare, and brace themselves by starting with "I would like to debrief a difficult situation with you and the story involves traumatic content."
- **CONSENT**
Ask for permission by saying something like: "I would like to debrief something with you, is this a good time?" or "I heard something really hard today, could I talk to you about it?"
- **LIMITED DISCLOSURE**
Decide how much to share, starting with the least traumatic information, and gradually progressing as needed. You may end up not needing to share the most graphic details.

www.tendacademy.ca/resources

Let us help-
customized
technical
assistance



- **Agency specific technical assistance**
 - Riverside Superior Court
- **VT Community of Practice Model**
 - Illinois VTT Cohort
- **OVC's Vicarious Trauma Response Initiative Project**
 - Supporting Cross agency collaboration:
Washington DC is a community implementation site that includes the Network for Victim Recovery of DC, DC Metropolitan Police Department, DC Forensic Nurse Examiners, DC Rape Crisis Center, Department of Forensic Sciences

TTA
available
at no cost!



The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

BLUEPRINT FOR A VICARIOUS TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATION

Victim Services



EMS



Fire Services



Law Enforcement



Self-guided
using VTT
and other
resources:

About the Toolkit

- [The VTT Model](#)
- [Creation of the Toolkit](#)
- [Who Should Use the Toolkit](#)
- [How To Use the Toolkit To Become Vicarious Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Acknowledgments](#)



Making the Pitch

Length: 10 minutes

Summary: In this video, you will learn how to develop a plan to obtain buy-in across the organization by delivering a pitch that uses data, as well as stories from the field and from inside your own organization, to motivate change, and uses the tools and resources in the Vicarious Trauma Toolkit to become a more vicarious trauma-informed organization.

Training Material

- [Listen/View Video](#)

Using the VT-Organizational Readiness Guide or VT-ORG

Length: 10 minutes

Summary: In this video, viewers will learn how to explain the importance of using the VT-ORG and sharing and communicating the assessment's significance to staff effectively.

Training Material

- [Listen/View Video](#)

Using the VT-ORG Scoresheet To Create Your Own Action Plan

Length: 2-4 minutes

Summary: This video guides viewers through the VT-ORG Action Plan, including the various components of the plan, and how to prioritize results for creating a more trauma-informed organization.

Training Material

- [Listen/View Video](#)

Compendium of Resources

Length: 2-4 minutes

Summary: This video demonstrates how to use the search and filter features of the Vicarious Trauma Toolkit Compendium of Resources, which can be used to supplement a developed VT-ORG Action Plan.

Training Material

- [Listen/View Video](#)



Acknowledging the Positive

- What we pay attention to, grows.
- Bringing conscious attention to the existence of vicarious transformation and vicarious resilience helps strengthen it.

Webinar Evaluation Code

OVC's Vicarious Trauma Toolkit: A Blueprint for Responding to Vicarious Trauma and Promoting Resilience

Scan the QR code with your
phone to open the survey
or you can click the link available
in the chat box.



Thank you!

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