

Trauma-Informed Support Grand Jury



“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

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Matti Girardi

Wellbeing and Inclusion Manager

CERTIFICATIONS:

- ❖ INTEGRATIVE SOMATIC THERAPY
- ❖ RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
- ❖ SOCIAL JUSTICE MEDIATION
- MASTERS IN EDUCATION CURRICULUM & TRAINING
- OUTSTANDING GRADUATE AWARD



Overview

- This training aims to introduce an understanding of secondary trauma, particularly how it impacts individuals who are involved in the justice system as a juror or victim.
- It will focus on both your personal well-being as a grand juror and the responsibility of conducting sensitive interviews with victims.
- By understanding trauma as a juror, you can foster an environment of fairness, empathy, and thorough decision-making.



Objectives

- Provide support on how you can process your own responses to disturbing content or emotional testimony, emphasizing self-care.
- Equip you with the knowledge and tools to engage with trauma survivors in a way that avoids re-traumatization.
- Enhance your ability to assess victim testimony with sensitivity to how trauma can impact memory, behavior, and responses.



Secondary Trauma

DEFINITION, SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND
SOLUTIONS



Defining Secondary Trauma

- Secondary trauma is frequently referred to as vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, or secondary traumatic stress.
- Definitions of secondary trauma vary, but most describe it as the impact of indirect exposure to traumatic events that can be disruptive and painful and can persist long after exposure.
- Many develop cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral symptoms of trauma as a result of working with traumatic material.
- Trauma triggers “fight, flight, freeze” responses, affecting memory, emotional regulation, and behavior.
- A growing body of evidence suggests that secondary trauma is an inevitable occupational hazard for any professional working with survivors of trauma and violence.

Important: Secondary trauma is a healthy response to unhealthy situations involving violence and loss.



Signs and Symptoms

- Preoccupation with victims' stories
- Intrusive thoughts/nightmares/ flashbacks
- Feeling estranged/isolated/no one to talk to
- Feeling trapped, “infected” by trauma, inadequate, depressed
- Sleeplessness
- Chronic exhaustion and/or physical ailments
- Minimizing/ numbness/ indifference

Individuals affected by secondary trauma respond in various ways, but the common and often inevitable impact is a **change in their worldview**



The good news is, there are solutions

- Individual resilience, well-developed coping strategies, and established support systems may contribute to you experiencing no or minimal impact from exposure to the jury-related trauma.
- More recent understanding of *secondary resilience* and *compassion satisfaction* refer to potentially positive effects of exposure to trauma. The positive effects include personal growth; increased belief in possibility of recovery; strengthened resilience; and increased commitment to the work of justice, fairness, and healing of victims and survivors.



The good news is, there are solutions

You can reduce the risk of negative effects from secondary trauma by:

- Focusing on self-care
- Learning coping strategies
- Asking for help and access support in jury-based peer groups
- Seeking professional support
- Recognizing positive aspects of working with victims of trauma





Juror Care Plan

How you can manage your emotional responses and support your fellow jurors in a trauma-sensitive way



Trauma-Informed Interviewing and Deliberation



Interviewing Victims with Sensitivity

- Create a safe environment where victims control the pace of testimony.
- Use non-directive questions: “Can you tell me more about what happened?” instead of leading questions.
- Recognize signs of distress and allow breaks if needed.
- Be patient with fragmented or delayed memories.

Grand jurors should approach testimony with patience, understanding, and non-judgmental care.



Evaluating Testimony

- Support each other: ensuring empathy and respect are maintained for one another.
- Decision-Fatigue: Take breaks- over the next month, simplify and automate the decisions in your life if you can.



Key takeaways

- Self-care is crucial to reduce secondary traumatic stress
- Grand jurors should approach testimony with patience, understanding, and non-judgmental care.
- Jurors are encouraged to access ongoing trauma-informed training, MCDA support, and resources for emotional well-being.



MCDA Resources

Resources	What	When	Who
Introductory Training	Slide show	After first case	Matti Girardi
Self-Care Plan and Somatic Practices	Handouts	During introductory training	Matti Girardi
Group Support Session(s)	Facilitated Sessions	TBD	Matti Girardi
Individual Support	1:1 Private Session	TBD	Matti Girardi
Have more questions or need more information?	Email or Phone	Anytime	Matti Girardi





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