

# Resilience for Professionals Exposed to Vicarious Trauma

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Review | Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin





WELCOME



# Voice for children's health

Children's  
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Kids Alive  
IN WISCONSIN

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# Objectives

- Provide an overview of Child Death Review & Fetal Infant Mortality Review
- Learn the cause for concern
- Learn about vicarious trauma and how it affects yourself & partners
- Understand the importance of vicarious trauma prevention & potential strategies



**The content of this session may be emotionally challenging or contain potentially triggering material.**



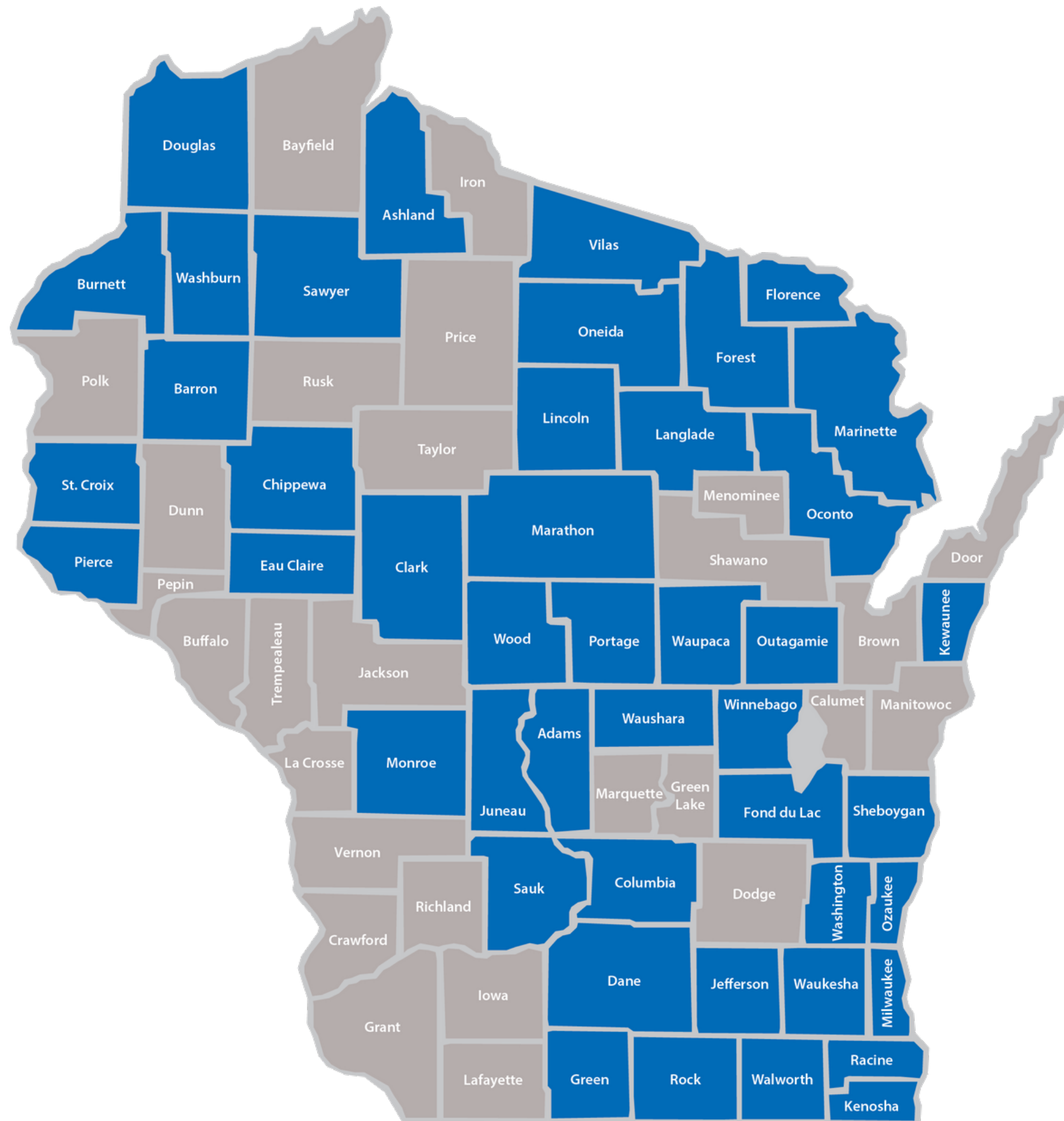


# Injury Prevention and Death Review



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# Child Death Review (CDR) & Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)

## CDR & FIMR are...

- Multidisciplinary teams
- Professional processes
- Committed to improve the health and safety of children
- Tool to understanding the how and why children and fetuses die

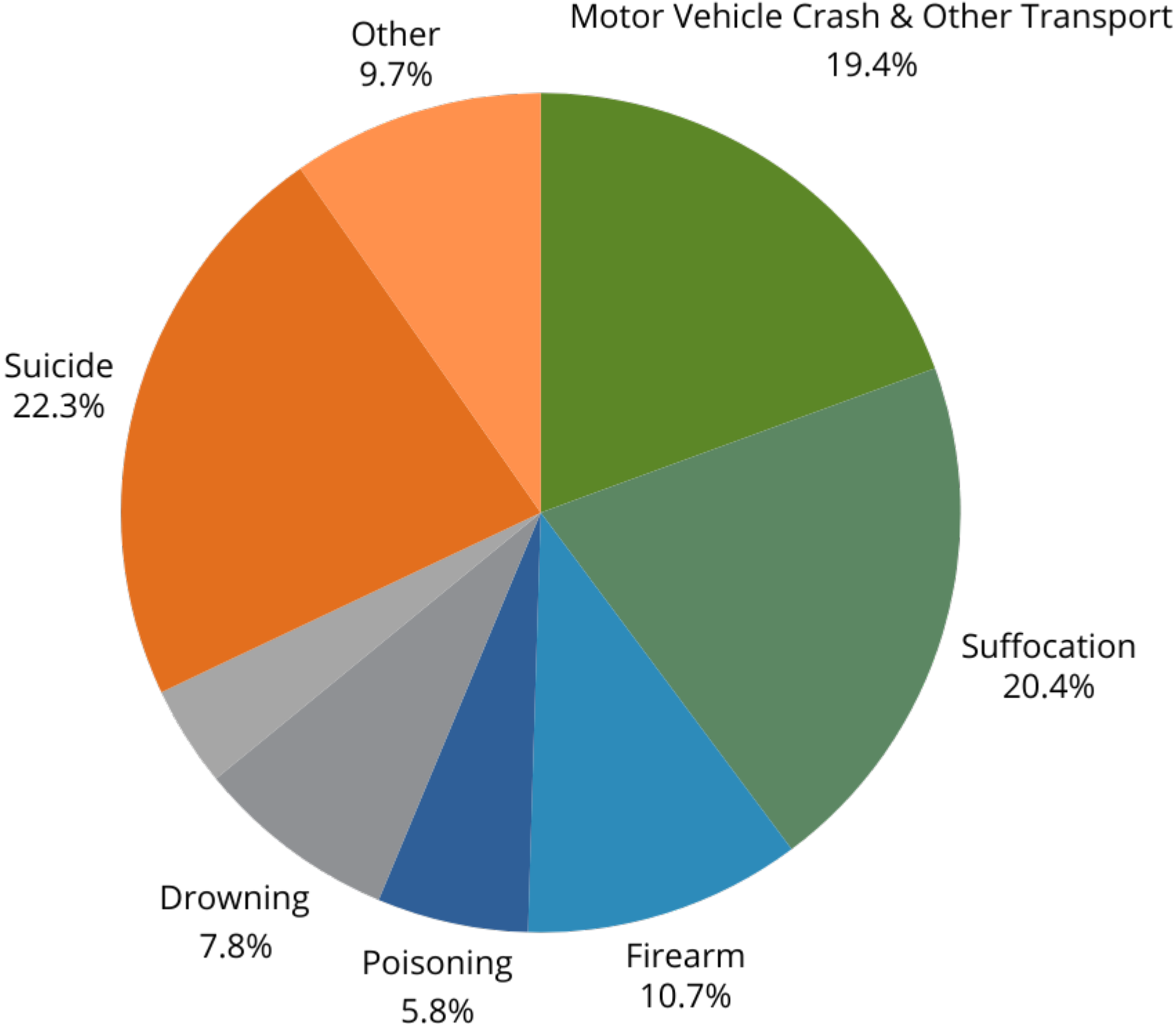
## CDR & FIMR are not...

- Peer reviews
- Designed to examine individual performances
- Opportunities to second guess agency policy or practice



# Child Death Review & Fetal Infant Mortality Review Cases Reviewed in Wisconsin

**Causes of injury deaths  
among children ages 1 to 17,  
2018-20**



# Child Death Review Outcomes



National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention, 2019





# Vicarious Trauma Prevention



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## Potential Traumatic Event

## Trauma is Two-Fold: Exposure & Symptoms

Potential traumatic event as defined by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5:

- Death, serious physical injury, sexual violence
- Direct experience, witnessing or learning about loved one as secondary exposure



# Operating definition of a potential traumatic event

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Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening, with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

(Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration [SAMHSA])

**Simple Potential  
Traumatic Exposure**

**Complex Potential  
Traumatic Exposure**

**Single Incident:  
Type 1**

**Multiple Incidents:  
Type 2**



# Vicarious Traumatization

“Transformation in the inner experience of the professional that comes about as a result of empathic engagement with trauma material...”





## Burnout

- Emotional exhaustion from trying to fulfill job demands
- Individual cannot realize work or personal goals

## Compassion Fatigue

- Prolonged exposure to stressful cases that outstrip restorative powers
- Leads to exhaustion, emotional numbness, mental disorganization, social apathy and spiritual disinterest



# Personal Symptoms of Vicarious Traumatization

12

Avoidance, hyperarousal, reexperiencing

Disturbance in cognitive schemas

Disturbances of mental health or mood

Alterations in meaningmaking

Relationship maladaptations



# Professional Symptoms of Vicarious Traumatization

12

**On high-alert or not paying attention**

**Overreacting**

**Struggle with authority**

**Missing work**

**Not paying attention**



# Inevitability of Vicarious Traumatization (VT)

Some aspects of  
VT are inevitable

Post secondary-  
traumatic growth



# Secondary Traumatic Stress

12

## Primary Symptoms

- Re-experiencing or intrusions
- Avoidance or hyper-arousal
- Behavioral
- Mental
- Dissociation
- Mild: Zoning out
- Moderate: Numbness, flatness, prolonged daydreaming
- Severe: Depersonalization, derealization, fragmented identity

## Secondary Symptoms

- Somatization: Stomach aches, migraines, conversion disorder
- Attachment
- Attention Regulation
- Emotional: Regulation and negative valence (anger, shame)
- Interpersonal
- Self-system: Identity diffusion or exaggerated self-concept
- Meaning-system (for older individuals)



# Long-Term Outcomes

Mental &  
Behavioral Health

Physical Health

School &  
Work Attainments

Anti-Social Behavior





# Experiences of Vicarious Trauma Symptoms from Wisconsin Child Death Review & Fetal Infant Mortality Review Teams



**How many of you, or someone on your team, experience vicarious traumatization impact as a part of child death review team or professional role?**





## Sociocultural contributing factors of vicarious traumatization

- Interacting with all, or nearly all, individuals experiencing trauma
- Large caseload and/or workload
- Limited professional development opportunities



## Personal contributing factors of vicarious traumatization

- Trauma history
- Avoidance of pain
- Young in the field
- Feeling overly responsible for prevention or change
- No time or support to reflect on experience with another
- Stressful life circumstances
- No self-care





**People cannot “more self care” their way out of vicarious trauma symptoms**



# Prevention Efforts: Agency/Institutional/Organizational

- Supervision/consultation
- Instrumental support
- Policy
- Mindfulness of amount of exposure to potentially traumatic events
- Workload and/or caseload not too high
- Teaming
- Professional development



# Prevention Efforts:

## Child Death Review & Fetal Infant Mortality Review Teams

- Lead team activities
- Create a team practice
- Acknowledge team efforts, prevention activities and agency collaboration
- Share resources and mental health support for members



# Vicarious Traumatization Prevention Efforts: Individual

- Conceptual or attitudinal
- Develop different professional roles
- Individual counseling support
- Meaningful social network outside work
- Active spirituality (fellowship, rejuvenate practices)
- Mindful practice (outside work)
- Embrace complexity
- Active optimism
- Holistic self care (physical, emotional, mental, aesthetic)
- Making meaning





Sleep



Physical



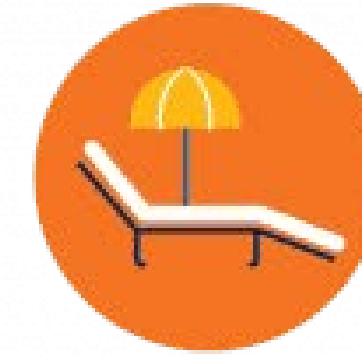
Focus



Connect



Play



Downtime



Time In

# The Healthy Mind Platter™

The Healthy Mind Platter, for Optimal Brain Matter™



# Developing a Plan

## Step 1

Creating an individual plan.

## Step 2

Developing a work group and peer support plan.

## Step 3

Connecting your plan(s) to the group and larger organization.





**What ways do you take care of yourself in order to avoid burnout, compassion fatigue or vicarious traumatization?**



**What strategies do you want to implement to help you transform experiences of vicarious traumatization into vicarious post-traumatic growth?**



# Resources

## **Job Works MKE: Bringing Trauma to Work**

- A video guide to understanding & managing employees in distress
- What can you do: tips for creating a “trauma -informed” workplace

## **Office for Victims of Crime: Vicarious Trauma Toolkit**

- Information & suggestions specific to professions and roles

## **Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL)**

- ProQOL Measure & Self Care Tools

## **SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma - Informed Approach**

- Manual and Framework for becoming a trauma -informed organization



Scan the QR code to complete the **session evaluation** :



[chawisconsin.org/initiatives/evaluation/](http://chawisconsin.org/initiatives/evaluation/)





THANK YOU

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