

# What Can I Do To Take Care Of Myself?

- Balance your workload.
- Take breaks. Get up and take a walk.
- Take a midday (lunch) break away from your desk.
- Take vacations.
- Get enough sleep.
- Do things you enjoy.
- Eat healthy.
- Take time to have fun/self care.
- Smile and have laughter in your life.
- Spend time with family/friends.
- Talk to an EAP counselor. (800-540-3758)
- Practice happiness.
- Start a gratitude journal.
- Ask for support from your supervisor and co-workers.
- Learn to savor what is happening now.
- When you have a positive feeling keep that with you and share it with others.
- Recognize your accomplishments and know you make a difference.
- Do something kind for someone else.

# Marathon County STS Support

Marathon County acknowledges that the work we do can result in STS. While perhaps more prevalent in those that work directly with children and families at risk, STS can be and is present in many of our employees throughout the County. STS is a natural consequence of doing the kind of work we do. The County supports staff in identifying, responding to, and building resiliency to mitigate STS symptoms. County and individual efforts to address STS strengthen employees and provide a needed balance in our lives, which ultimately helps us to serve our customers at the highest level.

For more information, contact a member of the Employee Resources Department at 715-261-1451.



# Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

*What it is and how do we  
take care of ourselves*



# What Is STS?

## Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS):

“the natural consequent behavior and emotions resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other. It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.” Figley, 1995.

- Indirect exposure to trauma through a firsthand account of a traumatic event. The vivid recounting of trauma by the survivor causes trauma reactions in the helping person.
- The stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.
- It comes from our perceptions of the person’s traumatic experience.
- Its symptoms can mimic those of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- It is sometimes referred to as Compassion Fatigue or Vicarious Trauma.

# Why Are We Vulnerable To STS?

- **Empathy:** We likely have a sincere desire to help people. We work daily with people who have experienced trauma. We listen to their stories and feel their pain.
- **Insufficient recovery time:** We listen to one story after another and often multiple stories in one day. We might not have the ability to recover from one story before the next story is told.
- **Vulnerable populations:** Children are our most vulnerable members of our society. When a child is harmed by a parent it can be especially difficult.
- **Don’t feel, be strong:** You might feel that others would judge you or would view you as unprofessional if they knew how the work impacts you emotionally.
- **Unresolved personal trauma or reminders of resolved personal trauma:** Our own personal histories can make us more vulnerable.

# What Are Signs Of STS?

- Intrusive thoughts
- Chronic fatigue
- Sadness
- Anger
- Poor concentration
- Second guessing
- Detachment
- Physical illness (i.e. headaches, stomach aches)
- Fearfulness/hypervigilance
- Feeling like no matter how much you give, it will never be enough
- Increase in addictive behaviors (i.e. eating, drinking, smoking)
- Guilt
- Withdrawal from support networks

