



Tips for Supervisors and Managers When Staff Experience Work-Related Traumatic Stress

Know your staffs' history...

Supervisors should:

- Cultivate and maintain a positive working relationship with your staff
- Be aware of how your own behaviors and interaction with your staff can impact their day to day work
- Know who on your team has had previous triggering events in their work.
- Know who has had life experiences (such as births and deaths, domestic violence, substance use, medical issues) that may make them especially vulnerable to certain work-related triggers.
- Know who in the CFSA community your workers feel close to or comfortable with, so they may be called upon for support.

Be on the lookout for signs of Primary or Secondary Traumatic Stress...

- Changes in your staff's appearance
- Changes in your staff's affect
- Symptoms of anxiety, depression, [acute stress disorder](#), [post-traumatic stress disorder](#), or other mood-related disorders in your staff

Step-by-step: If your staff member experiences a trauma-triggering event, or shows signs of primary or secondary traumatic stress...

1. **Connect.** Make contact with the staff member (in person, or by visual phone app) as soon as possible after the event (but no more than 48 hours after) to:
 - Find out what happened
 - Find out how the staff member experienced it in the moment
 - Find out what they have been feeling and going through since the event
2. **Inform.** Let them know that CFSA is keeping track of P/STS in the workforce in order to improve the agency's responsiveness, and you will therefore be documenting the triggering event, the date of your conversation with the staff member, and the support strategies you have identified together. They (and you) will receive email confirmation that this information was received.
3. **Dialogue and Plan.** Talk with your staff member about what they think they need in order to rebound and achieve excellence following the experience. Use motivational interviewing skills to encourage them to take advantage of available interventions, such as:
 - Increased contact/consultation with immediate supervisor or other manager

- Assessment of caseload
 - Training
 - Participation in supportive group discussion forums
 - Referral to contracted P/STS resource for short-term, confidential, 1:1 consultation
 - Referral to EAP for outside support
 - Independently pursuing external supports
4. **Document.** Beginning 8/17/20, document your discussion(s) and the identified intervention(s) in the P/STS Online Information and Referral system, found on the CFSA Intranet home page under Quick Links at “P/STS Online Information and Referral Form” or on the Web at <https://adminsupport.cfsa.dc.gov> (click “P/STS Information and Referral”).
5. **Refer for the new support resource.** If your staff member decides that referral to the contracted P/STS support resource will be helpful, check the box for that intervention in the online form. The staff member will have to sign a consent form (included at the end of this tip sheet), which you will upload to the online portal. Let the staff member know:
- Once the consent form is uploaded, the referral will be automatically sent to the contractor who will reach out to them directly, within 24 hours.
 - A copy of the referral form will be sent to them, to you, and to a designated HR point of contact. *NOTE: The information is sent to HR for contractor billing purposes only. It is **not** included in the staff member’s personnel file.*
 - The contractor will document the dates of consultation with the staff member in the online system, and whether the interaction was individual or group.
 - When they and the contractor have completed their interactions and the referral is closed, an email documenting the dates and types of interactions will be sent to them, to you, and to HR. The email will also provide a link to a satisfaction survey.
6. **Make the referral later.** If, at a later point, the staff member decides they would like to meet with the contracted P/STS support resource, you can re-enter the online portal and: 1) click the reference number to access the staff member’s original information; 2) in the comment box, request a referral to the resource and add the staff member’s phone; 3) upload the signed consent form; and 4) click "Add." As in step #5 above, an email requesting the service will be generated.
7. **Keep track.** You can track the status of the referral in the portal: when the contractor has accepted it; which member of the contractor’s team is assigned; and when it is closed.
8. **Check-in.** Check back with your staff member on a regular basis until you feel they have returned to confident and consistent functioning.

Need help?

If you need help supporting your staff through this process, discuss it with your manager and/or contact Dr. Brandynicole Brooks, CWTA Administrator at Brandynicole.Brooks@dc.gov



Consent for Referral to CFSA's Contracted Primary or Secondary Traumatic Stress (P/STS) Support Resource

By my signature herein, I give consent to have the information listed below shared electronically by my immediate supervisor (or other manager) with CFSA HR and CFSA's contracted P/STS support resource. I understand that I will be copied on all communications in which this information is transmitted. I further understand that the information is being sent to HR for contractor billing purposes only, and will not be included in my personnel file.

1. My name, position and work contact information.
2. The name, position and work contact information for the referring manager (and for my immediate supervisor, if different).
3. The type of trauma-triggering event I experienced (pick list, multiple selections allowed):
 - The death of a child, parent, kin, or resource parent on a case currently or previously assigned
 - A threat from a client or client's family member
 - An environmental threat in the field, such as gunfire or witnessing physical violence
 - Providing or observing disturbing or emotional testimony in the Family Court
 - A particularly difficult family separation or placement disruption
 - Any other highly-stressful, client-related event or circumstance that may impede a staff member's ability to complete ongoing professional duties (described)
4. The date(s) of dialogue and consultation about the event between myself and the referring manager.
5. The interventions identified by myself and the referring manager (pick list, multiple selections allowed):
 - a. Increased contact/consultation with immediate supervisor or other manager
 - b. Assessment of caseload
 - c. Training
 - d. Participation in supportive group discussion forums
 - e. Referral to contracted P/STS resource for individual consultation
 - f. Referral to EAP
 - g. Staff independently pursues external therapeutic resources
 - h. Other
 - i. Staff member declines interventions at this time
6. The dates of contact between myself and the contracted P/STS resource, and whether the interaction was individual consultation or group consultation.

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the above statements.

SIGNATURE

DATE