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**Reflect**

**Vicarious Trauma Self-Assessment Tool**

**A Self - Assessment Tool**

This tool is based on an original assessment tool developed by Stamm and Figley (Stamm, at pp.18 - 19; Figley, at pp.13 -14), and offered by them for use with mental health caregivers. The viability of using this modified tool to assess vicarious trauma with lawyers is still under assessment. It is recommended that this tool only be used as a self-assessment guide for lawyers who wish to consider their personal susceptibility to vicarious trauma. No mental health diagnosis should be made on the basis of this tool. If a lawyer has a mental health concern as a result of considering the elements of this self-assessment tool, the lawyer should consult further with a qualified mental health practitioner.

Charles Figley has said that caring deeply about others makes us emotionally vulnerable to the catastrophes that affect them. Compassion has both positive and negative aspects that may manifest themselves in your personal functioning, your work, and in your relationships with others through your work - including clients, co-workers, and adversaries. This self-test assists you in assessing your own level of stress from vicarious trauma. Try to use this tool at least monthly, as well as at the conclusion of any major piece of litigation involving death or alleged violence. Retain past tests to permit you to compare total scores as well as specific answers from test to test.

**Name:**

**Date of Assessment**:

Assign a number between 1 and 5 that comes closest to your existing feeling about yourself and your work, with 1 being rarely/never, to 5 being very often/always

**Personal Satisfaction**

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I am happy.  
2.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I am satisfied with my life.  
3.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have beliefs that sustain me and endorse the value of the work I am doing.  
4.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I learn new things from my clients.  
5.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I feel connected to others.  
6.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have a good balance between work, personal relationships, and free time.  
7.\_\_\_\_\_ \_I enjoy the company of some of the clients I work with.  
8.\_\_\_\_\_ \_I enjoy my work.  
9.\_\_\_\_\_\_I feel that I have the tools and resources to the do the job I have to do for my clients.  
10.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I have good peer support when I need to work through a problem or issue . in my practice.  
11.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel invigorated by helping a client.  
12.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel joy as a result of helping a client.  
13.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughts that I am a success as a helper of my clients.  
14.\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy my peers and co-workers.  
15.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I can rely on my peers and co-workers for support and understanding.  
16.\_\_\_\_\_ I have confidence in the skills of my co-workers.  
17.\_\_\_\_\_ I trust my co-workers.  
18.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I am able to keep up with new developments in the health care profession

for the benefit of my clients.  
19.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I am able to keep up with current best practise for better serving clients.  
20.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that my co-workers have confidence in me as a person.  
21.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that my co-workers have confidence in my skills.  
22.\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to do this kind of work for a long time to come.

Over 95: extremely high potential for work satisfaction; 85 - 95: high potential for work satisfaction; 75 - 85: good potential for work satisfaction; 55 - 75: some potential for work satisfaction; Below 55: Irregular and inconsistent potential for work satisfaction.

**How you feel about how you do your Work?**

23.\_\_\_\_\_ I am a sensitive person.  
24.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thought that I need more close friends (people that know me and are

supportive of me).  
25.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thought that there is no one to talk to about my highly stressful experiences

whom I can trust and who will understand the kind of stress that I will be talking

about.  
26.\_\_\_\_\_ I work too hard for my own good.  
27.\_\_\_\_\_ I have felt on edge about professional matters, and have attributed this to work with

one or two specific clients.  
28.\_\_\_\_\_ I wish I could avoid working with some clients.  
29.\_\_\_\_\_ I have felt weak, tired, and run down as a result of my work.  
30.\_\_\_\_\_ I have felt depressed as a result of my work.  
31.\_\_\_\_\_ I am unsuccessful in separating work from personal life.  
32.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel little compassion for or confidence in the skills of my co-workers.

33.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughts that I am a failure in my work.  
34.\_\_\_\_\_ I have a sense of worthlessness, disillusionment, or resentment in my work.  
35.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I am distracted by bureaucratic and unimportant tasks of practice and that

my skills and work would be better applied to direct client care.  
36.\_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I am not on the path to achieving my life goals.

Risk of Burnout scale: 34 or less: low risk for burnout; 35 - 51: moderate risk for burnout; 52 - 68: high risk for burnout; Over 68: extremely high risk for burnout.

**How you feel about yourself and your work because of your clients?**

37.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings or ideas that remind me of a

disturbing experience.  
38.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I find myself avoiding certain activity or situations because they remind me of a

disturbing experience.  
39.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have gaps in my memory about disturbing events.  
40.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I feel estranged from others (clients, co-workers, family, family equivalents).  
41.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.  
42.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have outbursts of anger or frustration, and experience irritability, with little

provocation.  
43.\_\_\_\_\_\_ I startle easily.  
44.\_\_\_\_\_\_ While working with a client I thought (even momentarily) about violence as a

solution to his/her interpersonal difficulty.  
45.\_\_\_\_\_ I have had flashbacks and other intrusive recollections connected to my clients.  
46.\_\_\_\_\_ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.  
47.\_\_\_\_\_ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.  
48.\_\_\_\_\_ I have had to "work through" an event in my life that I believed to be traumatic.  
49.\_\_\_\_\_ I am disturbed by something a client has said or done to me, and wonder whether it

will be repeated by other clients.  
50.\_\_\_\_\_ I experience dreams or intrusive thoughts that are similar to those of a client.  
51.\_\_\_\_\_ I have experienced intrusive thoughts of a session with a particularly difficult or

troubling client.  
52.\_\_\_\_\_ I have involuntarily recalled traumatic personal experiences while assisting a client.  
53.\_\_\_\_\_ I am preoccupied with more than one client.  
54.\_\_\_\_\_ I am losing sleep over a client's traumatic experiences.  
55.\_\_\_\_\_ I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of my clients.  
56.\_\_\_\_\_ I have felt trapped in my work with these clients.  
57.\_\_\_\_\_ I have felt a sense of hopelessness about my professional work when working with

my client.  
58.\_\_\_\_\_ I have put myself or others in danger for the purpose of working with a client.  
59.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughts that I need to demonstrate and prove my skills to others.  
60.\_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughts that I have no control over the results of my work.  
61.\_\_\_\_\_ I am planning to leave this kind of work.

**Risk of vicarious traumatization manifesting itself in a disorder.**

Any level of risk may manifest itself in a relationship upset or distraction with the client:

* Under 26: low risk of vicarious traumatization;
* 26 - 52: moderate risk of vicarious traumatization;

Over 52: likely risk of vicarious traumatization manifesting itself in reduced client service and high risk of developing into a disorder if uncorrected.