

ASCLD Trauma and Stress Working Group



ASCLD has identified a crucial need for research, and the development of tools to both understand and cope with the trauma and stress that can be a product of a career in forensic science. Thus, ASCLD has created a Trauma and Stress Working Group (TSWG) as part of the new “ASCLD Member Resource Committee” to identify the needs of the forensic community, and facilitate strategies to develop a workforce resilient to vicarious trauma and stress. This initiative was announced at the ASCLD symposium in Atlanta, with a Wednesday keynote focused on forensic practitioner stress and trauma. Building upon that foundation, ASCLD is partnering with the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL) and the National Institute of Justice to further the research and implementation of strategies in this field. I have asked Dr. Alice Eisenberg, Deputy Assistant Director FBI Laboratory, to chair this task group. I have also asked Chandler Police Department Forensic Science Supervisor Alicia Rosenberg, Dr. Jonathan McGrath with the National Institute of Justice, and Psychiatrist Dr. Andrew Levin to help us lead this initiative. The early work of this group is exciting, the initiatives they are planning are compelling, and the difference this group will make in the lives of forensic practitioners will be significant.

ASCLD remains dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation, and recognizes that our most precious resource is the highly trained forensic professional. The TSWG is working to aid in research and the development of coping tools and education for the Forensic community in effort to develop a resilient and capable work force.

One such resource is the FTCoE’s upcoming webinar “The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit - An Evidence Informed Resource for Organizations.” We would like to encourage our membership to take advantage of this opportunity THIS WEEK to understanding the impact of trauma and stress on forensic professionals and begin this important discussion within your organization. Information on this webinar is available below. A special thanks to our friends and collaborators at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCoE), the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP), and the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) for their work on this very important issue. (see next page for links).

Matthew Gamette
ASCLD President

Forensic Workforce Resiliency: Vicarious Trauma & Workplace Stress Webinar Series



- Special Announcement -

Crime Scene to Courtroom:

Workplace Stress and Vicarious Trauma Throughout the Criminal Justice System Webinar Series

Professionals throughout the criminal justice system are exposed to the aftermath of violent crime and its victims. These individuals may include forensic nurses, crime scene investigators, forensic practitioners, medicolegal death investigators, and other professionals in related fields. Research has shown that individuals exposed to disturbing situations may present symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and many rely on unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance abuse and other forms of self-medication. This phenomenon is known as vicarious trauma because the person affected was exposed to the trauma through the course of their work and did not experience it themselves. Additionally, the police culture in which many forensic professionals operate tends to stress self-reliance, and many have reported a reluctance to seek assistance. Previous research efforts have examined resources and coping mechanisms for first responders, such as EMTs and police officers, but few have been focused on forensic professionals. This webinar series explores common strategies and resources derived from existing research and offers guidance to forensic practitioners and the broader criminal justice community on how they can be leveraged.

[Check Here to Find out More about this Webinar Series!!](#)



The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit – An Evidence-Informed Resource For Organizations

When: Thursday, September 13th, 2018 from 1:00pm - 2:30pm ET

Vicarious trauma is an occupational challenge for forensic science professionals whose work entails continuous contact with victims of crime and violence, and the analysis of traumatic material. This webinar introduces the Vicarious Trauma Toolkit, and its premise that while the exposure to vicarious trauma may be inevitable, potentially negative consequences can be mitigated by organizations accepting responsibility to act and becoming vicarious trauma-informed.

Participants will learn about the Vicarious Trauma Organizational Readiness Guide (VT-ORG), an evidence-informed assessment of an organization's current capacity to address vicarious trauma. Examples will be provided on how to search the Toolkit's Compendium of Resources to find tools appropriate for forensic organizations.

[Check Here to Find out More and Register!!](#)