# Debriefing 101

sharing our stories safely

WITH JESSICA DOLCE, MS CCFE NOVEMBER 2022



#### What Is Debriefing?

General, wellbeing debriefings are
structured conversations where staff can
reflect on and safely express thoughts
on the difficult nature of their work and
how they are being impacted

Sessions might involve discussion of a recent case or event, but not necessarily!

Today: we're reflecting on how the work has impacted us in positive ways



#### Trauma Exposure @ Work



- Primary Trauma (Direct)
- Secondary Trauma (Indirect)
- Vicarious Trauma



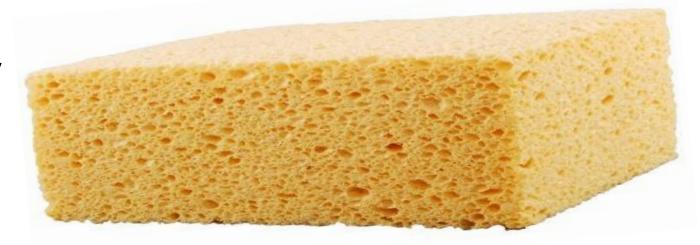
### More Debriefing = Reduced STS

Research findings consistently show that teams report lower levels of Secondary Traumatic Stress when they have regular access to supportive, professional conversations where they are encouraged to reflect and express their experiences regarding their work.



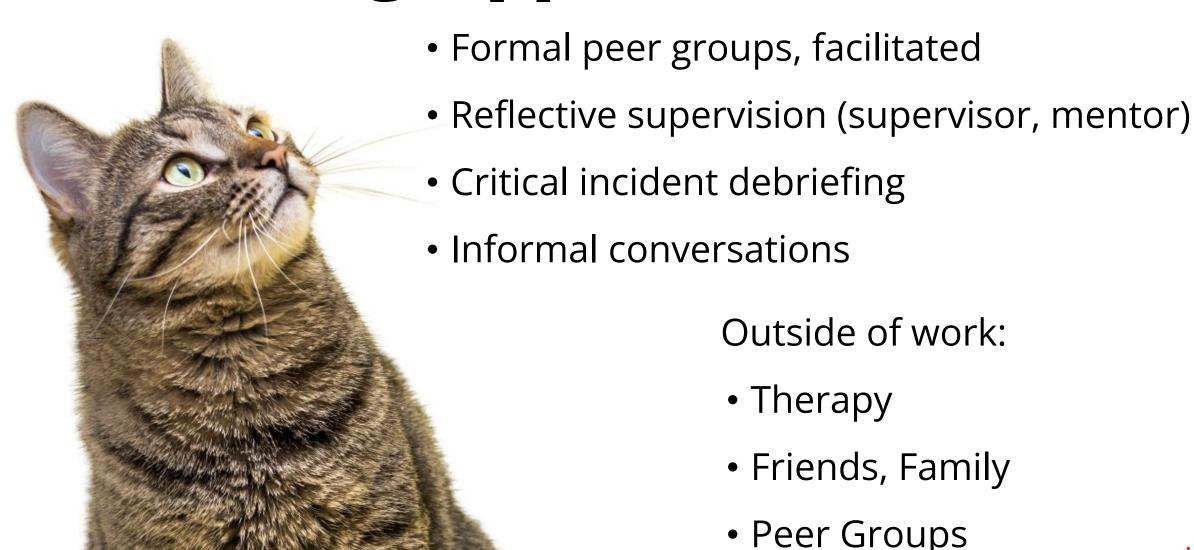
#### Why Sharing Helps

- Reduces isolation, normalizes experiences
- Shifts distorted thinking (may be fueling guilt, anger, etc.)
- Strengthens social support
- Opportunity to learn coping strategies, self-awareness techniques, and resilience tools





#### **Debriefing Opportunities**



#### **Use Low Impact Debriefing**

- Self Check: Slow down, are all the gory details necessary? Mind the (STS) slime
- 2. **Heads Up:** Content warning, "I'd like to talk about a hard experience I had with a cruelty case involving a puppy."
- 3. Get Consent (before you vent): "Can I talk to you about it? Is now a good time?" Wait for + respect answer!
- 4. Limited Disclosure: Start w/least traumatic info, focus on feelings, reactions, thoughts (may be enough), listener controls dial



Adapted from Low Impact Debriefing: Preventing Retraumatization by Françoise Mathieu and Guidelines for Debriefing Effectively for Helping Professionals by Amanda Rocheleau



#### **Tips for Sharing Safely**

- Org support needed
- Trained facilitator
- Not the time for performance reviews (save for another meeting)
- Agree on + uphold discussion guidelines...





### Tips for Listening

- Keep it confidential
- No advice or fixing!
- Listen w/out cross talk (1 mic, 1 speaker)
- Track your own stress reactions and regulate (ground, breathe, etc.)
- Validate, normalize feelings and reactions



## Let's Practice!

Reflect on positive impact of work, practice structured discussion, mind the slime, hold space without fixing

Handout available for more □

**Questions?** 

Discussion boards or email: jessica@jessicadolce.com





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sos! sharing our stories Tips for Debriefing + Reflective Supervision

Sharing our stories and reflecting on the work we do is a critical, careersustaining practice. Doug Fakkema, a pioneer in compassion fatigue education and humane euthanasia practices, counsels animal shelter workers to never let more than 48 hours go by after performing a

euthanasia before talking to someone about what you've experienced. We all need a healthy outlet to express, process, and release what we've witnessed or experienced. But we need to share skillfully, so that it doesn't amplify negative emotions. This is where various kinds of debriefing come in handy. Here are four ways we can incorporate healthy sharing into our

The Daily Debrief: The goal is immediate reflection to process the difficult experiences from the day and to avoid getting stuck in rumination later.

As a pair: Ask someone at work to be your "debrief buddy." This might be your supervisor, a supportive work friend, or, if you do shift work, the person who is clocking in, as you clock out at the end of your shift. Managers, allow staff time to debrief while they are still on the clock.

Meet up for ten minutes at the end of work to debrief about what happened that day, what you will do to cope when you go home, and asking for any support needed. You may wish to end by asking each other to share one positive or meaningful thing that happened that day.

Always use Low Impact Debriefing (LID) to reduce secondary trauma exposure for the listener (more details on LID on the last page).

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