

Debriefing 101

*sharing our
stories safely*

WITH JESSICA DOLCE, MS CCFE
NOVEMBER 2022



jessica
DOLCE
PRACTICE *compassionate* BADASSERY

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



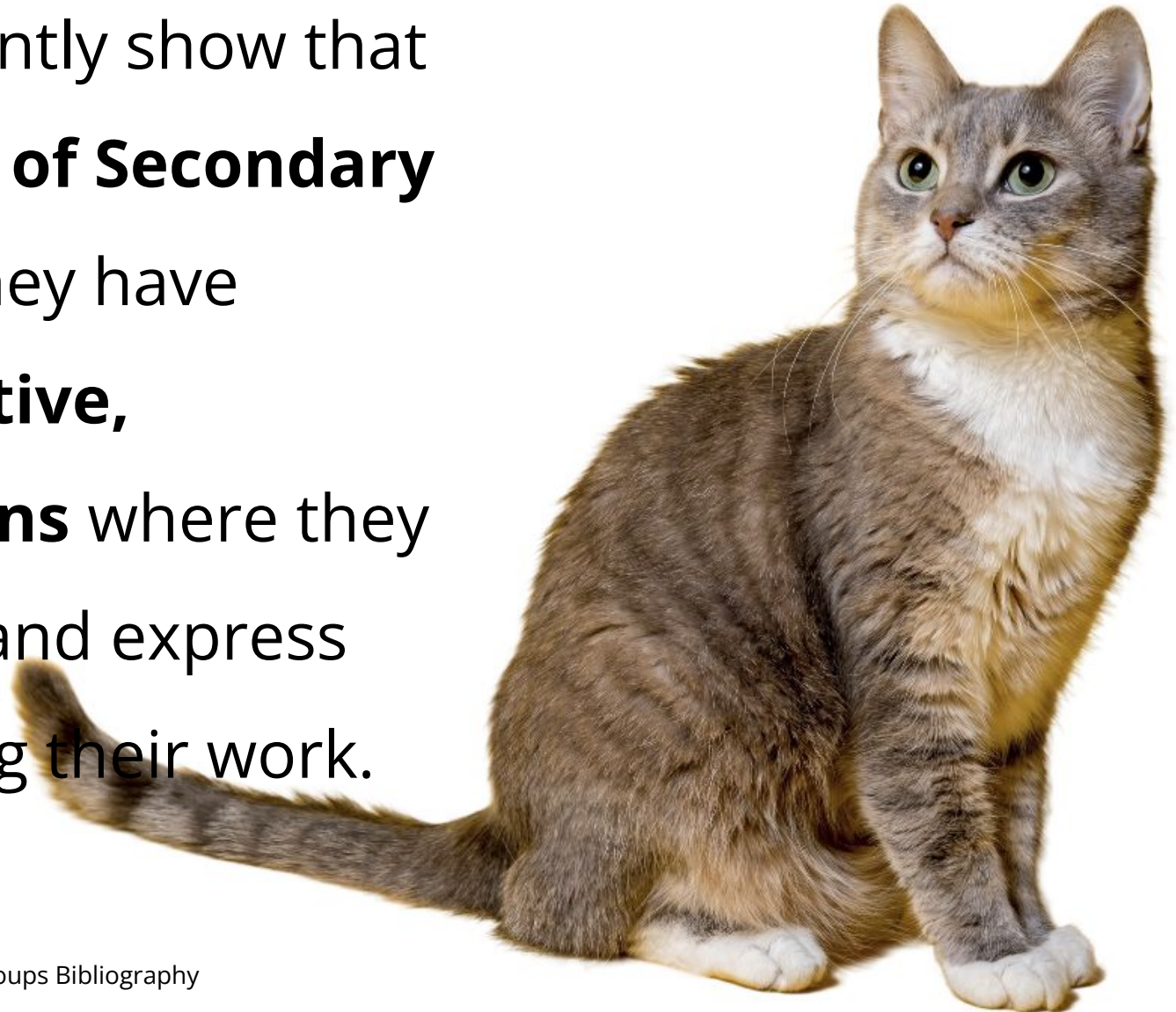
Trauma Exposure @ Work



- 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



- Formal peer groups, facilitated
- Reflective supervision (supervisor, mentor)
- Critical incident debriefing
- Informal conversations

Outside of work:

- Therapy
- Friends, Family
- Peer Groups

Use Low Impact Debriefing

1. **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

