



Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery
**Advocate Education and
Support Project**



Beth Israel Deaconess
Medical Center



A teaching hospital
of Harvard
Medical School

The Advocate Education and Support Project (AESP) is an educational and discussion series created specifically for advocates and supervisors who work with traumatized individuals and families.

The AESP grew out of the expressed concerns of domestic violence advocates and supervisors in Boston. All were concerned about the negative effects of doing front-line trauma work. The Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery, with advocates and clinicians from the community, began to develop and pilot the eight-week series that currently exists. Through didactic presentation, participatory exercises, and discussion, advocates learn how to more effectively enhance their work lives and sustain themselves. The group strives to increase advocates' health and morale and create a positive work environment.

Services Include:

Professional Development Series: Advocates from different settings—court, health centers, shelters, and other community agencies—come together to discuss the challenges of this work and create a network of support, improving both job performance and the response to survivors.

Latino Advocates Series: Tailored to the unique needs of Latino advocates, this series is offered in a combination of Spanish and English, providing the opportunity for participants to explore their experience of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) in a culturally sensitive way.

Series for Advocates with a Personal History of Trauma or Abuse: We provide a safe place to explore how advocates' personal experience may affect her/his professional identity and relationships.

Eight-week cycles are offered throughout the year in various locations.

Workshops: Designed to introduce advocates and agencies to STS and its effects on staff, as well as ways to improve self-care strategies.



Secondary Traumatic Stress/Compassion Fatigue is the “natural behaviors and emotions that arise from knowing about a traumatizing event ...the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized person.” (Figley, 1995)

Common Effects of Secondary Traumatic Stress include:

- ◆ Powerlessness or hopelessness
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Self-doubt
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Decrease in quality and/or quantity of work
- ◆ Withdrawal from work or co-workers
- ◆ Exhaustion, irritability

If you feel that you are experiencing Secondary Traumatic Stress:

- ◆ Speak with your supervisor
- ◆ Reach out and connect with others in your agency or profession during the workday
- ◆ Seek help both within and outside your agency
- ◆ Take some planned time off as opposed to “calling in sick”
- ◆ Connect with friends or colleagues by phone, e-mail, or in person
- ◆ Consider making changes in your job responsibilities and/or schedule
- ◆ Get outside, take a walk or exercise in other ways
- ◆ Ground and calm yourself through meditation or prayer

How to Contact Our Program:

- ◆ Call 617.667.8141 Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
- ◆ www.bidmc.harvard.edu/violenceprevention

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