



---

# Working with Victims of Crime: The Basics

---

## Information Sheet: The Basics of Self-Care .....

Developed from Hill, J.K. (2004). *Working with Victims of Crime: A Manual Applying Research to Clinical Practice*, Ottawa ON: Justice Canada.

- ❖ Self-care is key to better service delivery.
- ❖ Workers need to take care of themselves first, if they are to effectively help their clients.
- ❖ Workers can be models of good self-care.
- ❖ Workers can choose to apply effective coping strategies (dealing directly with the problem) rather than poor coping strategies (avoidance, ignoring, “working through the stress”).
- ❖ Self-care behaviours can include:
  - ◆ Self-Assessment- watch for signs of stress and strength (Grosch & Olsen, 1994; Kottler, 1999).
  - ◆ Use of effective supervision from superiors and peer support from coworkers (Grosch & Olsen, 1994; Kottler, 1999).
  - ◆ Setting boundaries, both in your work and home life (Grosch & Olsen, 1994).
  - ◆ Building a balanced life (Grosch & Olsen, 1994).
  - ◆ Using support groups, therapy, outpatient treatment, etc. (Grosch & Olsen, 1994).
  - ◆ Education and professional development.
- ❖ Spend time reading on self-care and try some of the activities suggested.

The following web resources may be useful:

### **Web Resources:**

Richardson, J. I. (2001). *Guidebook on vicarious trauma: Recommended solutions for anti-violence workers*. Ottawa, ON: Health Canada.

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/pdfs/trauma\\_e.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/pdfs/trauma_e.pdf).

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies:

[www.istss.org](http://www.istss.org)

Hope Morrow's Trauma Central: Several articles on vicarious traumatization and burnout: <http://home.earthlink.net/~hopefull/>

Dr. Laurie Anne Perlman has a selected bibliography on the web at:

[www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/ts/vt.htm](http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/ts/vt.htm)

National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

[www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)

National Family Violence Clearinghouse, Health Canada:

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence)

### **Other Information Sheets in this Series:**

The Basics of Victimization

The Basics of Victim Reactions and Coping

The Basics about Deciding to Refer to Mental Health Professionals

The Basics about the Stages of Change

The Basics to Cover in an Initial Interview

**References:**

Brown, C. & O'Brien, K. M. (1998). Understanding stress and burnout in shelter workers. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 29 (4), 1998, 383-385.

Grosch, W. N. & Olsen, D. C. (1994). *When helping starts to hurt: A new look at burnout among psychotherapists*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Kottler, J. A. (1999). *The therapist's workbook: Self-assessment, self-care, and self-improvement exercises for mental health professionals*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.



Policy Centre for Victim Issues



Research and Statistics Division

August 2004