



Supporting Cultures of Safety in a Time of Fatigue

A Conversation with Praesidium & FADICA

1



Safeguarding: Holistic Approach



2

Types of Abuse

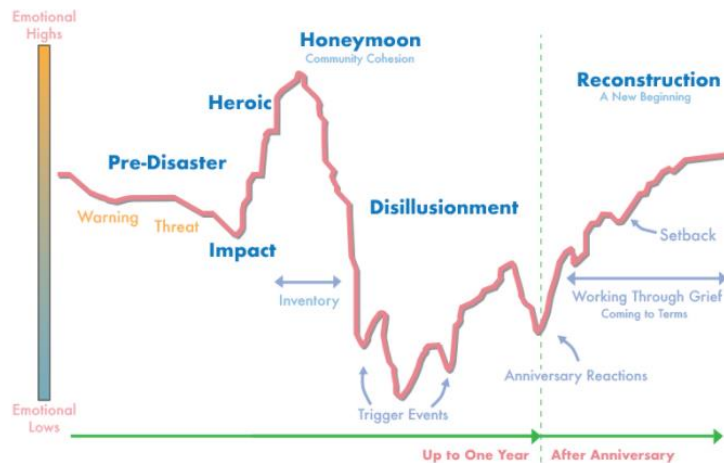
- Physical
- Sexual
- Verbal/Emotional
- Mental/Psychological
- Exploitation
- Neglect
- Financial/Economic

A Year of Crisis, Uncertainty, and Fatigue

- Global Pandemic
- Quarantine
- Social Isolation
- Racial Injustice
- Weather Disasters
- Election
- Virtual Adaptations
- Loss and Grief



Phases of Community Disaster

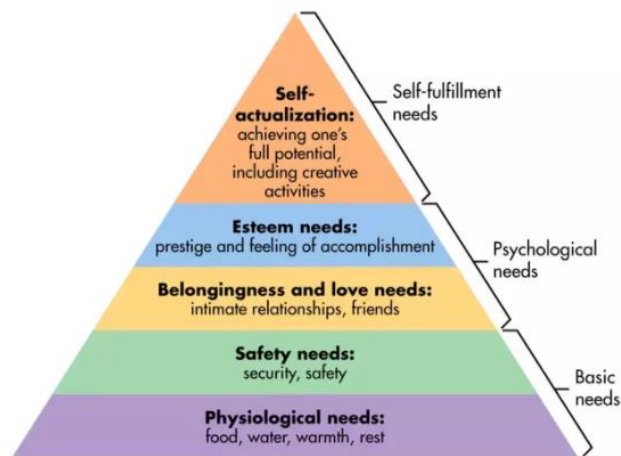


<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/recovering-disasters/phases-disaster>

PPRAESIDIUM

5

Meeting Everyone's Basic Needs



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

PPRAESIDIUM

6



Impact of Fatigue on Safeguarding

7

Potential Increased Risk

- Physical abuse and/or inappropriate discipline
- Boundary violations with clients
- Incidents of abuse and exploitation
- Client-to-client inappropriate behaviors

8

Characteristics of a Culture of Safety

1. Leadership is committed and vocal

Leadership shows their commitment by providing resources and by saying and doing specific things that reflect and reinforce the culture.

2. Standards are clear

The culture has been clearly articulated. Policies and procedures are in place and clear. Staff and volunteers know what they can or cannot do.

3. Standards are enforced

Policies and procedures are adhered to win both positive and negative consequences in place.

4. Everyone knows safety is part of their job

Safety is ingrained in daily operations and clearly expressed in training and policies.

5. Everyone takes warning signs seriously

Staff and volunteers know the red flags to watch for and do not hesitate to say something if they see something.

6. Everyone reports concerns

A clear and easy reporting process is in place and staff/volunteers are comfortable reporting their concerns.

7. Employee engagement is high

Staff and volunteers echo the commitment shown by leadership and they take to heart the organization's dedication to safety.

Because staff engagement and morale play key roles in sustaining safeguarding efforts, it is important to recognize and address forms of fatigue.



Fatigue Might Look Like...

- Increased irritability
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- Lack of motivation
- Change in affect
- Forgetfulness
- Loss of purpose or hope
- External distractions
- Vicarious or secondary trauma
- Less adherence to established rules and policies
- Relaxed boundaries with clients

Low Morale

- Low morale can lead to drift from standards:
 - Example: “I don’t feel supported so why should I go “above and beyond”?”
 - Example: “I’m tired, nobody seems to care, and I am struggling to keep up with what is expected.”
 - Example: “We just keep getting more and more things to do, and I want to know how we’re supposed to do it?”
 - Example: “I don’t know how to sustain this.”

Boundary Violations

- Staff are responsible for setting and maintaining healthy boundaries with clients
- Understand that not all boundary violations are intentional or ill-intentioned
- People may blur boundaries or violate policies with the best of intentions, but may end up in a compromising situation or false allegation



Professional Boundaries

PRAESIDIUM

15



Healthy Professional Boundaries

- The protective framework in which the staff-client relationship occurs
- The emotional and physical space that allows the client to focus on their needs, not on staff's needs
- The parameters that ensure staff treat all clients fairly
- Cultivates awareness of the inherent power dynamic that exists between staff and clients

16

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Results in positive outcomes, including:

- Reducing the risk of client exploitation
- Building trust and respect with clients through clear and consistent roles
- Increasing one's own well-being by minimizing stress, burnout, and anxiety
- Protecting the team's dynamics and effectiveness
- Providing a healthy role model for clients and colleagues

We can help staff create and maintain healthy professional boundaries by integrating supervision, support, feedback, reflection, and self-care into their daily lives.



17

Strategies for
Supporting
Staff in a
Culture of
Safety



18

Support and Resources

- Listen and allow staff to vent
- Build a culture of connection in new ways – where the agenda is not “work-centric” but personal check-ins
- Offer encouragement and empathy
 - Example: highlight at least three things the staff is doing well
 - Example: if appropriate, share something you’ve been struggling with and how you have addressed it
- Carve out time for a needs assessment with staff and offer resources when you are able (this could be done individually, in focus groups, or via a survey)
 - Example: if staff are feeling overworked, look at the programming schedule to see if you can incorporate more breaks or alternative staffing patterns
 - Example: if staff say they do not have the supplies they need, find out what they need and why and a plan for how to either acquire supplies or adjust expectations/needs for supplies
- Advocate for staff needs to other organization stakeholders
- Normalize individuals reaching out for help rather than “toughing it out” or “being a trooper”

Importance of Self-Care

When self-care is neglected:

- Individuals may push themselves beyond their limits and become overextended, which can lead to burnout and poor decision making
- Individuals may be without a positive outlet for negative input, which can lead to vicarious trauma, stress, health problems, and decreased job performance
- Individuals may deal with pent-up negative feelings by relying on unhealthy coping strategies



“How can you fill someone else’s cup when yours is empty?”

“It is okay to treat yourself with as much compassion as you treat your clients, coworkers, and loved ones.”

Forms of Self-Care

Physical – moving in a way that feels good for you

Spiritual – connecting with nature or something bigger than yourself

Emotional – having a safe place to express how you're feeling

Professional - keeping work skills sharpened to feel successful and prepared

Personal – fueling your body's needs

Psychological – giving time to rest mentally and self-reflect

21

Spiritual Self-Care

The end of the calendar year can be a great time for spiritual renewal and nourishment, either with staff members or individually.

- Prayer
- Retreats
- Devoted time for reflection or meditation
- Scripture/inspirational readings
- Mindfulness or gratitude exercises



22

Keep Morale High

- Find ways to remind staff of the organization's values and mission and highlight positive ways staff are contributing to that mission
- Acknowledge how staff have adapted and been innovative to meet client and program needs
- Celebrate small wins, progress, and resiliency
- Communicate important updates to keep staff informed
- Recognize and address negativity – empathize and seek after solutions
- Implement peer recognition methods
- Note successes and nurture opportunities for growth
- Formalize and encourage regularly scheduled breaks – normalizing increased time for hand hygiene and maintenance of personal protective equipment

Manage the Risk

- Train and model expected behaviors for staff – leadership sets the tone
- Communicate clear expectations for interactions between staff and clients, including any changes that have been made for adapted programming – refresh these expectations often and hold staff accountable
- Assess staff's skills – if staff are struggling in a certain area or expectation, provide more training and coaching (from a supervisor or from peers)
- Conduct site visits and observe interactions between staff, and between staff and clients
- Talk to clients and their parents/guardians



How have you successfully identified and responded to fatigue at your organization?

What messages or acts of support have you seen resonate well with staff or clients?

How can your organization continue to prioritize safeguarding entering a new year?



25

KEEP IN TOUCH

Colleen Crawford
Program Manager, Child and Vulnerable Adult
Safeguarding Initiative
CCrawford@fadica.org
FADICA

Laura Hardin Aceves, LMSW
Account Manager
LHardin@PraesidiumInc.com
Praesidium

26