



# ***“Secondary Traumatic Stress”***

Secondary traumatic stress describes a mental health challenge that results from indirect exposure to details of one or more potentially psychologically traumatic events in the course of professional duties. Such indirect exposure is also known as vicarious trauma.

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy





# ***“Secondary Traumatic Stress”***

This is an evolving term. Secondary traumatic stress may be an occupational hazard of the helping professions, that is, people in these occupations may be at higher risk of developing secondary traumatic stress.

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy





# ***“Secondary Traumatic Stress”***

Secondary traumatic stress reactions can be similar to the symptoms experienced by those with posttraumatic stress disorder, and can include symptoms like reexperiencing, hypervigilance, and avoidance.

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy





# ***“Secondary Traumatic Stress”***

*Secondary traumatic stress falls within the category of “empathy-based” stress outcomes for caregivers. This category also includes constructs such as compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma. The driving cause of secondary traumatic stress is an empathic relationship that is the conduit for exposure to details of one or more potentially psychologically traumatic events.*

***#WordsMatter***

**Enhancing Mental Health Literacy**





# ***“Secondary Traumatic Stress”***

**Find more resources here:**

**For PSP:**

<https://www.pspmentalhealth.ca/>

PeerOnCall: <https://www.oncallapp.ca/>

**For Healthcare Workers:**

<https://www.beyondsilence.ca/>

<https://healthcaresalute-soinsdesantesalute.com/>

**For Families:**

<https://www.pspnet.ca/en/for-families-of-psp>

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy

Heber A, Testa V, Groll D, Ritchie K, Tam-Seto L, Mulligan A, Sullo E, Schick A, Bose E, Jabbari Y, Lopes J, Carleton RN.  
Glossary of terms: A shared understanding of the common terms used to describe psychological trauma, version 3.0.  
Health Promot Chronic Dis Prev Can. 2023;43(10/11). <https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.43.10/11.09>





# Glossary of Terms

## Background

The Glossary of Terms was created to promote a shared understanding of many common terms used to describe mental health challenges arising from exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic events and stressors.

The initial iteration of the glossary was intended to

1. Facilitate open discourse and conversations among the many partners and stakeholders at the National Conference on PTSD held in 2019; and
2. Assist in developing the Federal Framework on PTSD. To date, Act C-211 stands as the only federal government Act that acknowledges the importance of work-related risk factors in the development of PTSD in certain professions.

# COLLABORATING

The Glossary of Terms brings together a diverse, multi-institutional, pan-Canadian group of academics, clinicians, and policy makers. Together, we are working towards a broadly accepted set of terms for clinicians, scientists, policymakers, people with lived experience, and the general public.

