

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

About vicarious trauma

People who work with individuals who have experienced trauma may be exposed to vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma is “second hand” trauma that is passed on when interacting with individuals who experienced trauma “firsthand.”

In your job, you may not directly experience the trauma, but because you work with people who have, you may be exposed to their traumatic experiences indirectly. In your job, you may work with people who have experienced a wide range of experiences that would be considered traumatic for most people. These may include:

- Specific events or multiple experiences
- Experiences from the past or that are happening now
- Experiences of individuals as well as families and communities over time
- Experiences with some social systems (such as child protection services, courts, prison, etc.)

Instructions

These questions ask about:

1. What parts of your job expose you to other people’s trauma experiences (i.e., vicarious trauma)
2. How often you encounter vicarious trauma exposures
3. How distressing these vicarious trauma exposures are for you

These questions ask you to consider all parts of your current job and all the people you work with over the last 30 days. This questionnaire asks you only about the last 30 days because it assesses the types of vicarious trauma you are regularly exposed to in your current role. People in different roles may have different types of vicarious trauma exposures.

For each type of vicarious trauma exposure in this questionnaire, you will be asked:

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work? [Exposure frequency]

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you? [Exposure impact]

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

In the last 30 days as part of my work....

Clients sharing about trauma

Scoring column

1. I listen to clients describe their trauma experiences, memories, and events.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

2. I listen to clients talk about how governments and community systems have emotionally or physically hurt them.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

3. I listen to clients speak about hurting, abusing, or neglecting another person or animal.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

Receiving & reviewing evidence of trauma

4. I read documents (notes, reports, emails, etc.) from staff members at my organization that describe the trauma experiences of clients that I work with or those seeking services.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

b

a

b

a

b

a

b

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

In the last 30 days as part of my work....

Receiving & reviewing evidence of trauma	continued from previous page				
5. I read documents (referrals, records, etc.) from outside organizations that identify trauma of clients that I work with or those seeking services.					
a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times per day (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per day (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times per week (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per week (2)		
<input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice a month (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not in the last 30 days (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not part of my work) (0)			
b. How distressing is this usually for you?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (did not happen) (0)
6. People at outside organizations discuss with me trauma of clients that I work with or those seeking services.					
a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times per day (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per day (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times per week (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per week (2)		
<input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice a month (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not in the last 30 days (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not part of my work) (0)			
b. How distressing is this usually for you?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (did not happen) (0)
7. Family and friends involved in clients' care tell me about trauma clients have experienced.					
a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times per day (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per day (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times per week (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per week (2)		
<input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice a month (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not in the last 30 days (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not part of my work) (0)			
b. How distressing is this usually for you?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (did not happen) (0)
8. As part of my work, I view images (photos, drawings, videos, diagrams etc.) of traumatic experiences.					
a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times per day (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per day (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times per week (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> About once per week (2)		
<input type="checkbox"/> About once or twice a month (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not in the last 30 days (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not part of my work) (0)			
b. How distressing is this usually for you?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all (0)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A (did not happen) (0)

Scoring column

	a
×	b
	a
×	b
	a
×	b
	a
×	b

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

In the last 30 days as part of my work....

Receiving & reviewing evidence of trauma

continued from previous page

Scoring column

9. As part of my work, I encounter media coverage (TV, news articles, social media, obituaries etc.) of trauma experiences.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

10. Clients show me their physical wounds, injuries, and scars caused by traumatic experiences.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

Scoring column

a

×

b

a

×

b

Documenting & reporting trauma

11. (When appropriate) I write documents (emails, letters, reports etc.) to outside professionals describing trauma of clients.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

12. (When appropriate) I discuss clients' trauma experiences with family and friends involved in their care.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

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b

a

×

b

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

In the last 30 days as part of my work....

Documenting & reporting trauma

continued from previous page

Scoring column

13. I document people's experiences of physical, emotional, and sexual trauma and neglect in notes, logs, or reports.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

×

b

Staff members sharing about trauma

14. People working at my organization tell me about clients' traumatic experiences.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

×

b

15. People working at my organization tell me about traumatic events that happened to them or they witnessed at work.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

×

b

16. Staff members disclose to me trauma that has happened to them in their personal lives.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

a

×

b

Vicarious Occupational Trauma Exposure (VOTE) Index

VOTE scoring instructions

Scoring method

The VOTE Index can be scored two different ways.

Option 1: Weighted VOTE Index Score

For each of the 16 vicarious trauma exposures, multiply each exposure frequency score (question a) by that exposure's impact (question b). Sum all 16 multiplied scores for a total Weighted VOTE Index score (score range: 0-320).

Option 2: Exposure Frequency Score

Sum all exposure frequency scores (question a) across all 16 vicarious trauma exposures. Do not include exposure impact scores (score range: 0-80).

Weighted scoring example

13. I document people's experiences of physical, emotional, and sexual trauma and neglect in notes, logs, or reports.

a. How often in the last 30 days did you encounter this in your work?

- Multiple times per day (5) About once per day (4) A few times per week (3) About once per week (2)
 About once or twice a month (1) Not in the last 30 days (0) N/A (not part of my work) (0)

b. How distressing is this usually for you?

- Extremely (4) Moderately (3) Somewhat (2) Slightly (1) Not at all (0) N/A (did not happen) (0)

Scoring column

4

× 2

8

Calculated **Weighted VOTE Index Score** for this survey.

Calculated **Exposure Frequency Score** for this survey.

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