

Listening When Listening Hurts: Understanding and Managing Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Traumatization

It has been said that listening is an art and that psychotherapists are professional listeners. The art of listening, unfortunately, may also become problematic, and even harmful to the listener. Listening changes the listener, and its vicissitudes may impact one's own sense of safety, well-being, or competency. This seminar will explore the terrain of clinical listening and how occupational hazards--compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout--may lead to decreased work performance or satisfaction. We will explore how to minimize, eliminate, and ameliorate the negative impact of listening and identify positive self-care practices. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences and engage in both didactic and experiential components. Anyone who listens to people in pain, provides services to those afflicted by oppression and discrimination, or bears witness to acute or chronic traumata, is encouraged to attend.

Seminar Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will gain a richer understanding of the forms of listening often encountered professionally and the "dangers" of therapeutic listening.
2. Participants will gain practical self-care skills to help navigate compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization and burn-out.