



A GUIDE FOR FE MANAGER AND LEADER

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What does it look like in FE settings?



There is a wide variety of FE settings which will also vary in terms of employers what secondary trauma could be caused by and look like.

Cause examples

1. *A colleague or learner discloses information about a personal issue to you which is very delicate and sensitive.*
2. *You have a pastoral role and know about a variety of learner issues, some of which are very traumatic.*

Presentation examples

1. *You may have difficulty concentrating on your work out of concern for individuals and thinking about what you have been told. This may include PTSD-style flashbacks that involuntarily and vividly reliving the traumatic event and can have a significant impact on your day-to-day life.*
2. *You may have heard about a variety of traumatic experiences and started to feel 'numb' in your everyday life due to compassion fatigue.*
3. *You may avoid certain places as a result of the information given. This could also be subconscious avoidance.*

Why do staff need support with secondary trauma?

As we're told in the safety instructions on planes, you have to put your mask on **after others if you are struggling yourself.** **In other words it's difficult to look**

It's so easy to get caught up in trying to help learners or colleagues with their trauma that we forget about our own, burying or masking it as we try to get by in life. Add to this the fact that FE staff care deeply about their learners and the purpose of their work, and it can be easy not to accept personal struggles and promote a culture of constantly striving no matter the cost.

For some staff, secondary trauma may go unnoticed for a long time, then build up until it becomes so unmanageable they have to be signed off work or are unable to continue in their chosen profession. A mentally healthy workforce will be better placed to support learners and ensure valuable FE staff are retained

How to deal with secondary trauma

We've looked at how it can help to be aware of the symptoms of secondary trauma and watch out for them in yourself and colleagues. But how can you deal with the symptoms of secondary trauma? Take a look below at some of

Types of Self-care



Recuperative

Recuperative self-care means allowing your mind to rest and relax. It looks different for everyone, but might include reading, mindfulness, talking to loved ones, or simply getting enough sleep.



Restorative

Whether it's walking more, going to the gym or swimming. Keeping your body in good shape physically through exercise and diet will help you better deal with things on an emotional level.



Recreational

Communal activities where you get outside and connect with people can be another way to combat the effects of secondary trauma. Again, this will look different for everyone but might include sports, outings or community groups where you take part in a hobby you enjoy.

ETF's Centres of Excellence have produced a number of resources and delivered a number of free training sessions.

The resources and recordings of webinars can be found below listed headings used across the [SEND Exhibition website](#).

Recognising the signs and reaching out

Finally, it can help to identify to indeed relat. (g)flhd heg

As an organisation

There are many ways you can promote and prioritise staff care as an organisation; and what works for one FE setting may not work for another. However, it might help to ask yourself these questions as a starting point:

- **Do we talk about mental health as an organisation?**
- **Do we acknowledge the mental and emotional needs of staff?**
- **Do we encourage staff to get help if they are struggling?**
- **Do staff know how/where to get support?**
- **What support do we provide for staff?**
- **What are we doing to ensure staff are working in a psychologically safe environment?**



Signposting to further support

Would you know where to signpost a colleague who is struggling? Is there accessible and clear information about the referral pathways for a staff member

regardless of whether a colleague needs support as the information could be needed at any time.

Sources of further support to consider are:

- **A GP referral**
- **Find an NHS psychological therapy service** - The NHS Talking Therapies, for Psychological Therapies, IAPT) - <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service>
- **Assist Trauma Care** – Offers telephone counselling and support to individuals and families in the aftermath of trauma. Tel: **01788 551919**.
<http://assisttraumacare.org.uk/>
- **Education Support Helpline: 08000 562 561**

