

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) Prevention & Intervention Programs

The CEBC defines Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) Prevention & Intervention Programs as programs, interventions, and practices that are designed to prevent the development of STS, or to reduce the impact of STS that has already occurred. Secondary traumatic stress (STS) is a trauma condition similar to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In fact, in 2013, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5), expanded Criterion A for PTSD to include work-related events such as those experienced by repeatedly hearing about traumatic events from the survivors of the trauma or hearing about an extremely traumatic event. Despite high rates of indirect exposures by professionals working in the trauma field, these experiences may not always be repeated or extreme, even though symptoms of distress and even functional impairment may occur. This makes STS a condition that can parallel PTSD but is not always the same as the disorder. In fact, STS symptoms may range in severity from mild to extreme, and that functional impairment at work may exist even in milder cases. In addition, the trauma and secondary trauma experienced by their clients and staff can affect organizations and the organizational culture. If left unaddressed, STS can have a negative impact on the ability of individuals and organizations to help children and families. Child welfare supervisors and administrators have the challenging task of developing and maintaining high-quality practice in an environment that can lead to traumatizing their staff.

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) Prevention & Intervention Programs topic area criteria:

- **Target population:** Staff and practitioners (e.g., support staff, caseworkers, social workers, supervisors, managers, administrators, directors, etc.)
- **Services/types that fit:** Services can target individuals, organizations, or both levels. Services may include professional development; coaching and mentoring; supervision; or individual and group interventions, as well as programs to address organizational factors, agency climate, leadership development, or supervision practices.
- **Delivered by:** Child welfare professionals, supervisors, clinicians, trained paraprofessionals
- **In order to be included in this topic area on the CEBC:** Program must specifically target the prevention or reduction of STS as a goal.
- **In order to be rated in this topic area by the CEBC:** There must be research evidence (as specified by the CEBC [Scientific Rating Scale](#)) that examines STS outcomes, such as changes in symptom levels, behaviors, and/or functioning. In addition to demonstrating STS outcomes, programs may also examine organizational outcomes, such as improvement in workforce performance, satisfaction, or retention.



The table below provides a summary of the rated programs currently listed in the [Secondary Traumatic Stress \(STS\) Prevention & Intervention Programs](#) topic area. More detailed information can be found on the CEBC website.

Program	Overview	CEBC Scientific Rating	CEBC CWS Relevance Level
Community Resiliency Model (CRM®)	Set of six biologically based wellness skills used for self-care that can be practiced to stabilize emotions when facing emotional and physical distress. The key aim is to inform individuals about the biological responses associated with trauma, stress, and resilience and to learn skills that aid in resetting and stabilizing the nervous system.	3	Medium
Compassion-Focused Therapy for Secondary Traumatic Stress (CFT for STS)	An evolution-informed, biopsychosocial therapeutic approach that aims to help those who struggle with shame and self-criticism through the utilization of psychoeducational concepts and guiding participants through a range of mind-body practices.	3	Medium
Emotion-Focused Training for Helping Professionals (EFT-HP)	A 14-day online intervention developed to reduce the incidence of compassion fatigue in helping professionals with the goal of decreasing levels of STS, burnout, or compassion fatigue and increase compassion satisfaction or resilience.	3	High
Mockingbird Family (TM)	Designed to improve the safety, well-being, and permanency of children, adolescents, and families in foster care, and grounded in the assumption that families with access to resources and support networks are best equipped to provide a stable, loving, and culturally supportive environment for children and adolescents.	3	High
Self-Compassion for Healthcare Communities (SCHC)	A six-hour healthcare adaptation of Mindful Self-Compassion which aims to improve well-being and personal resilience in healthcare professionals or other caring professionals by teaching mindful self-compassion skills to deal with distressing emotional situations as they occur at work and at home.	3	Medium

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