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Tips to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma and Enhance Resilience

1. **Talk to colleagues and trusted others.** Try not keep your feelings and experiences bottled up or be afraid to reach out for support.
2. Prioritise yourself. **Set boundaries to balance your time and energy between work, play and rest.** Be realistic that this won't always be achievable.
3. **Seek meaning and opportunities for self-expression** (*what gives you a sense of meaning, purpose, belonging and understanding?*).
4. **Be mindful** of quick fixes to boost energy or to manage stress, such as alcohol, food, sugar, caffeine, cigarettes and medications.
5. **Remind yourself of the reasons you do the work you do.** Reaffirm your commitment to truth, justice, human rights, the wellbeing of others and the planet.
6. Build **professional connections.** Develop a '**Buddy System**' – look out for each other. Seek **supervision** and **professional development** opportunities.
7. **Develop balance** in your work life i.e. a variety of cases, teaching, research etc. (may not always be possible in some organizations or roles).
8. **Be mindful of working late and on weekends** – set limits on your work time. Create and retain space for other things in your life.

9. **Examine your ways of being with clients or written material:**
 - pull back to **think** rather than *feel* at appropriate times
 - monitor your **empathy** and **compassion** levels, don't be too open or shut down
 - get fresh air or **take a short break** between interviews and meetings

10. Be mindful of **being pulled into, or swamped, by clients' experiences or pain**. Try **not to imagine your client's story happening to you or your loved ones**. Pull yourself back to the present by focusing on your breathing and reminding yourself of your role.

11. **Maintain realistic expectations of what you can and can't do or achieve**. We won't always get the desired outcome. We can only do our best.

12. If your self-care strategies aren't working, **seek professional support**: explore the impact your work has on your life and how you and your work affect one another. If you have a history of trauma or are currently experiencing significant stressors, then you will understandably be more vulnerable at these times. Consider whether it may be appropriate to pursue, or return to counselling.

13. **Sense of humour** - laughter is healing but also be mindful of using humour as a way to avoid feelings.

14. **Be compassionate when you make mistakes** and use it as an opportunity to learn and develop your craft.

15. **Know you have a choice to do this work or not**. If you perceive yourself as having no choice (*it is your moral or ethical duty, others' expectations, necessary for long term career goals, financial etc.*) it will create further stress and increase the likelihood of vicarious trauma responses, compassion fatigue and burn out.