Professional Issues Across the Recovery Continuum: Boundaries and Self Care

Why is the obvious so elusive?

Cultural models and rituals promote sacrifice for the welfare of others
“Normal reactions to abnormal events”
“Every disaster is different”

Relationship Between Unrealistic Optimism and Secondary Traumatic Stress

Shalvi, Shenkman, Handgraaf, and De Dreu
Journal of Applied Social Psychology
Project Heartland
OKC Bombing MH Recovery Program

• Only small percentage within clinical range of symptoms
• 65% positive for some symptoms of PTSD
• 77% assessed at risk for burnout
• Several developed health problems*


“Compassion fatigue results from taking on the emotional burden of a patient’s agony”
• Self care begins before the disaster
• Self assessment of readiness for deployment
• Lifestyle not a technique or “stop gap” measure