

How Can I Select a Good Training on STS?

Quality Assurance for a Secondary Trauma Training or Workshop

Are you a conference or event organizer looking for a Secondary Trauma presentation at your event? Here are things that we recommend in order to ensure that your event and presenters are Secondary Trauma Informed.

Rationale: Professionals who work in high stress, trauma exposed fields are directly and indirectly exposed to trauma every day. We at the STS Consortium believe that it is important not to unnecessarily expose professionals to gratuitous traumatic material. Therefore, please consider the following as you prepare your presentation and your event:

- The presenter should only include detailed graphic content or images if it has a clear educational purpose. Cases or examples can be discussed without disclosing graphic detail.
- If the presenter intends to include graphic content, please inform your workshop participants before the workshop begins.

How can I Select a Good Trainer on STS?

The availability of secondary traumatic stress training has grown exponentially over the past decade. As there is currently no nationally recognized accreditation body that oversees STS training certification with proper accountability and quality assurance for the trainings, the best approach is to research and find solid and reliable references from any trainer that you are considering.

Here are some suggestions on what to look for:

1. What is the trainer's **experience** in the field? Does their website and/or CV provide information about their professional certifications, academic training, body of work, and length of experience? Does their website and/or CV tell you what audiences they have trained in the past? Is this congruent with your needs?
2. Where do they get their **training curriculum**? Do they provide academic references upon request? Are they using evidence-informed research whenever possible? Are they open and willing to share this information?
3. **Ask about past trainings.** A reputable STS trainer should be willing to readily share examples of past workshops that they have delivered with details on content, learning objectives, samples of evaluations from past participants, and references that you can easily contact for feedback and impressions.
4. If this training request is being held by your workplace, is the trainer willing to **customize** the workshop to your agency or attendee's specific needs? Are they willing to share an outline of what will be covered in the training and work with you to adjust it as necessary? Do they have a **needs assessment** process (this can be formal or informal depending on the situation)?

5. Discuss **content** of the training. If your needs assessment identifies that your audience needs a more advanced presentation (beyond a focus on an overview of STS), is this trainer able to do this?
6. Will the trainer provide an **evaluation form** for participants? How will this be compiled and shared back with you?
7. Is it the **right time** for this training? In our experience, requests for STS training are not always advisable when there has been a recent critical or traumatic event in the workplace and/or major structural changes. In those instances, the trainer should recommend other resources for debriefing, psychological services, conflict management, etc. as applicable. An experienced trainer should also be willing to postpone or even refuse an STS workshop request should they conclude that it is not an advisable time for this training.
8. Will the trainer be offering **additional resources** following the training? This can come in the form of resource handouts, webinars, bibliography, videos, and consultation services.