



CONTACT US

Helping Our Women
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Visit our website:
helpingourwomen.org
and check us out on
facebook or
instagram\



HOW OFFICE

Our Provincetown
office is open 9-4.
We are closed for
holidays on
Friday Nov. 10,
Thursday Nov 23, and
Friday Nov 24.

Eastham remains
under construction
and we've ordered
new furniture so we
are getting close and
will have another
update in next
month's newsletter.

Face masks & rapid
COVID tests remain
available for pick-up or
delivery.

Greetings!

I want to start by giving thanks to the women in our community who served in the armed forces, as well as those of you who lived as parents, partners, or children of family members in the armed services. Please know that as a member of the HOW community, we all benefit from the lives of the women who have served and are now members of HOW as volunteers, donors, and/or clients. On this note I'm including some information on vicarious trauma because we are all hearing so many headlines from across our country and the world about human suffering and violence. Giving thanks for everyone in and supporting the Helping Our Women community! -Gwynne

Thanksgiving Meal Delivery -- sign up by Wednesday Nov. 8

We will be participating in the Family Pantry Thanksgiving meal program that offers a turkey or chicken and "fixings" which includes vegetables, stuffing mix, etc. You need to be an enrolled client with the Family Pantry. If you are part of our mobile food program, you are enrolled. **Please call Cathy, our new Client Services Manager, to sign up for a turkey or a chicken by end of day on Wednesday Nov. 8.** Delivery on Sunday Nov. 19 11:30-2.

Welcome Cathy McDonough, Client Services Manager

Originally from Easthampton, MA, Cathy moved to the Outer Cape in 1991 on a whim. Captivated by the raw beauty of the ocean and dunes, the sense of community and a certain special guy in Wellfleet, she knew she was here to stay! Cathy enjoys helping people and that has been consistently reflected in her varied work history. Her career has taken her down several paths, including sales manager at Karol Richardson, licensed Realtor with Sweetbriar Realty and a lengthy tenure as a patient coordinator at the Wellfleet Dental Group and most recently for the last 7 years as the office Manager of the Outer Cape Dental Group. When not at work, Cathy enjoys running and hiking the trails of the CCNS, gardening, surfing, traveling or spending time with family and friends. Cathy lives in South Wellfleet with her husband Tom and their dog Maisy and is thrilled to make a home cooked meal when either of their 2 grown kids make their way home.



FREE COMMUNITY

ACUPUNCTURE

IN WELFLEET

ON TUESDAY NOV 7 & 14

3-6PM @ 200 MAIN ST.

WELFLEET

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CALL CATHY FOR MORE

INFO.

QUESTIONS ABOUT RENT

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

OR SNAP (FOOD BENEFITS)

OR FUEL ASSISTANCE?

Call Cathy!

REMINDER

All our services are free, thanks to donors and grant funding.

We do accept donations for rides.

OUR TEAM AT HOW

Mary Berry

Office Manager

Gwynne Guzneau

Executive Director

Cathy McDonough

Client Services Manager

Annette Medina

Pantry Manager

Lisa Phillips

Volunteer Coordinator

****Now Recruiting****

Americorps VISTA

Community Food Project

Coordinator

****Now Recruiting****

Americorps VISTA

Volunteer Resource

Developer

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. When it's not managed, diabetes can damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart, and is linked to some types of cancer. Here are some tips from the National Institute of Health to manage diabetes and for those of us who don't have diabetes some of these tips still apply:

- **Manage your A1C blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.** Ask your healthcare provider what is the optimal level for your body.
- **Manage lifestyle changes to slowly build healthy habits.** Take small steps to eat healthier, be more physically active, and get enough sleep.
- **Take care of your emotional/mental health.** A counselor may help you find ways to manage stress. Or call 988 to get some stress reduction tips.
- **Take your medicines on time even if you feel healthy.** Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you're having trouble managing your medications.

Help Paying for Medicine & Searching Benefit Programs

Here are two websites that we've learned about from the National Institute of Health that may provide you some information about drug discount programs or other benefit programs.

- **RxAssist.org.** Patient assistance programs run by drug companies, some may say they are only for uninsured, yet we have HOW members who have successfully negotiated reduced drug costs, so check out this resource.
- **Benefitcheckup.org.** Online tool that provides info about different benefit programs related to food/nutrition, healthcare and medication, for older adults and people with disabilities, tax help, and many other categories. You can search based on your zip code.

Food Programs on the Outer Cape

- **Soup Kitchen in Provincetown (SKIP)** resumes its daily hot meal program Monday November 6. 12:30-2pm M-F, Free and open Thanksgiving Day!
- **Truro Community Kitchen.** Free meals every Tuesday afternoon delivered to Truro residents of any age. Call 973-868-7526 or visit their website: trurocommunitykitchen.com
- **Wellfleet:** Mustard Seed meal program: meals delivered on a temporary basis call 508-349-2049. OR 246 Community Kitchen serves weekly meals at the Methodist Church at 246 Main Street.
- **Eastham:** Grab & Go free meal on Fridays at the Senior Center. Call Cindy Dunham at (774) 801-3153 to confirm the dates and to learn about other meal/food programs in Eastham.
- **Lasagna Love** program provides a one-time meal cooked by local volunteers and delivered to your home. Dietary restrictions accommodated. Call Cathy at HOW for more help..

Excerpted from: Your Local Epidemiologist. “Social media, terrorist attacks, war, and vicarious trauma” by KATELYN JETELINA AND JULIE KAPLOW. OCT 17, 2023

[Note: This is an email newsletter that focuses on public health matters, so I thought I'd share this issue with you given recent events in Maine and across the globe. Take care of yourself. -Gwynne]

The darkest parts of humanity continue to unfold with the Israel-Hamas War— millions face pain, suffering, separation, fear, loss, hunger, thirst, disease, and desperation. It's beyond devastating. Bearing witness to these experiences is nothing like being on the ground, but can be unrelenting in its own right. And, never has there been so much coverage of terror and horror on social media. The pictures. The details. The heinous acts. The constant exposure. The accompanying slurs. It can evoke deep sadness, significant stress, and vicarious trauma that is far-reaching and potentially long-lasting. I partnered with a friend and colleague, Dr. Julie Kaplow—a psychologist specializing in the study and treatment of trauma and grief—to dive deep into what we've learned from other traumatic events, who is most impacted by this media coverage, and what we can do as individuals to lessen the blow.

What is vicarious trauma?

Events can negatively affect people a world away from the scene, especially when this involves witnessing fear, pain, grief, and terror that others have experienced. This is the “cost of caring”:

- We empathize with victims and this can cause us to “feel their pain.”
- We may also feel directly threatened, especially when we relate in some way to those most impacted —“this could be me” or “this will be me.”
- We feel helpless to do anything.

Our attitudes and worldviews shift after exposure to distressing images of these events. This is vicarious trauma—the psychological impact of second-hand exposure to traumatic events. If left unrecognized and, in some cases, untreated, it can lead to depression, anxiety, PTSD, social withdrawal, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts.

How many people experience it?

It's challenging to estimate. Some studies find about 1 out of 30 people, some up to 1 in 8, and some closer to 1 in 4 people. Regardless of the exact number, it does seem to impact mental health service surge capacity. One study in the Lancet found that heavy social media use after such events translates into an excess of 12% mental health service burden. Prevalence varies because of variation in how vicarious trauma is measured and where it's been studied. But, perhaps most importantly, the extent of suffering depends on the dose of exposure and socio-demographic predisposing factors.

Dose: Media exposure matters

Widespread media coverage of war, and particularly terrorism, has harmful effects on mental and physical health. And the more you interact with social media and television, the worse its impact. We've seen this over and over in the literature from other events:

- In a 2014 Israeli study, the higher the media exposure during terror attacks, the higher the distress and post-traumatic stress symptoms levels.
- After 9/11, those who watched 4+ hours of TV coverage daily were more likely to experience acute stress.
- After 9/11, frequent early exposure to 9/11-related television predicted posttraumatic stress symptoms and physical health problems two to three years later.
- After the Boston Marathon bombings, repeated bombing-related media was associated with higher stress than direct exposure. Acute stress steadily increased with additional hours of media exposure.

Unfortunately, most research has focused on television exposure. For example, in a systematic review, 97% of studies were about watching TV. Of course, the information landscape has changed. Social media is not unfiltered, mis/disinformation is rampant, and exposure can be unexpected (for example, encountering gruesome photos while scrolling through feeds of pets).

Some recent studies have tried to fill the space. One simulation study found community PTSD prevalence almost doubled after social media video sharing of a terror attack compared to television.

Socio-demographic predictors

Everyone can experience vicarious trauma, but certain socio-demographic groups are at higher risk:

- Shared social identity with victims. For example, a study on the Pulse nightclub terror attack, which occurred on Latin night, found Hispanics and LGBTQ individuals were more likely to develop acute stress through media exposure than other demographics.
- **Females are at far higher risk.** One study in Pakistan found vicarious trauma among adolescent females was particularly high.
- Pre-event traumatic exposure and/or traumatic loss. Your experience before an event significantly impacts how you experience a current event. One study found direct exposure to 9/11 or Sandy Hook was more likely to cause acute stress after the Boston Marathon bombing.

What can we do?

Of course, social media use can be a positive force too, like increasing social connectedness. One study found that social media was protective against vicarious trauma when the content was focused on heroic acts and viewing information about the conflict itself (rather than the suffering).

There are a number of things we can do to reduce vicarious trauma while remaining up-to-date on the Israel-Hamas War:

- Turn off auto-play videos on social media.
- Walk away from social media after a time. Put on a timer.
- Pay attention to how you're feeling. If you're feeling overwhelmed, do activities that make you feel calm or relaxed.
- Seek social support. Being around other people who care about you is one of the best ways to reduce stress.
- Talk to someone you trust. This can be a family member, a friend, clergy, or a therapist.
- Find ways to feel useful. This can include donating to causes that help address the needs of those suffering or even just reaching out to a neighbor or friend who is struggling.
- If you have children, monitor what they're seeing or hearing. As overwhelming as the media exposure is for adults, it can be even more confusing and stressful for kids. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network is a helpful resource for discussing war with kids.

Bottom line

Being witness to terrorist attacks and war can set off a cascade of collective trauma that results in physical, mental, and emotional impairment for thousands; far more extensive and for far longer than we may think. If you're hurting, overwhelmed, and exhausted, you're not alone.

Love, YLE and JK