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**To Resolve or Not Resolve: Past Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress in Volunteer Crisis Workers**

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**Abstract**

Trauma workers may be at risk of secondary traumatic stress (STS) through indirect exposure to traumatic material, especially if they have experienced personal trauma. This is the first study to ask whether past trauma resolution influences STS and was examined in 64 *volunteer* crisis workers, a greatly ignored population. Those with non-resolved personal trauma had higher scores on an STS measure than volunteers whose trauma histories were resolved, while the latter showed less STS than the sample as a whole. STS was unrelated to volunteer experience, exposure to victims, or the type of cases found most distressing, indicating that accepted STS risk factors may not apply to volunteers. Findings have resounding implications for the popular view of trauma history as an STS risk factor: this may double as both a significant peril and a protection, depending on whether the past trauma is resolved.