Vicarious trauma in interpreters and language mediators: Perceptions, beliefs and experiences. (Ref. SoSS-2020-001)

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Vicarious trauma (VT) is a reaction secondary to exposure to clients’ traumatic experiences, reducing the ability to be empathic and caring (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Mental-health professionals receive VT training while interpreters/mediators working in mental health settings do not (Miller et al, 2005; Splevins et al, 2010; Hsieh and Nicodemus, 2015). While the risks of VT can be reduced with adequate training, research findings reveal no such support is available for interpreters/mediators working in mental healthcare (Miller 2015), doing humanitarian work (Moser-Mercer, Kherbiche and Class’s 2014) or working in contexts of crisis and emergency (Federicci & O’Brien 2018). Nonetheless, interpreters/mediators are expected to show empathy and be psychologically minded (Miller et al, 2005). This project will investigate interpreters/mediators’ perceptions, beliefs and experiences of VT, aiming at providing guidance to develop this much needed, specific VT training for interpreters/mediators.

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