

# Teaching while the Black Dogs bark

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## AVOIDING THE BITE OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA

### BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

While schools continue to rightly prioritise the pastoral care and wellbeing of their students alongside their educational outcomes, every professional educator and school employee who interacts with and tries to help traumatized young people is vulnerable to Vicarious Traumatization (Lawson et al., 2019).

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent does Vicarious Trauma affect the wellbeing of secondary teachers in a digitally saturated age?

- Do students experience the impact of trauma more keenly in a digitally saturated age?
- Are teachers who are professionally and morally obligated to support students who have been affected by trauma at risk themselves?
- What can be done to better equip teachers to protect themselves from or mitigate the impacts of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma?

### AIMS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of literature that shows (a) an increase in children's and adolescents' experience of trauma in a Digitally Disrupted age (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020), and (b) the relationship between social media exposure and the experience of trauma (Office of the eSafety Commissioner, 2018). This study will then explore through the lens of the bidirectional connections of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory and Honneth's Recognition Theory, (a) teachers' experience of secondary or vicarious trauma' in a digitally disrupted age, in order to (b) contribute a framework of recommendations for the wellbeing of teachers experiencing Vicarious Trauma and (c) better equip teachers to more healthily and productively engage (Kidger et al., 2015) in the vitally important field of the trauma informed classroom.

### REFERENCES

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STUDENTS ARE INCREASINGLY EXPERIENCING TRAUMA AND LOW MENTAL HEALTH, WHICH THEY CARRY WITH THEM INTO THE CLASSROOM

THE DIGITALLY SATURATED LIVES THEY LIVE, IMPACTS THEIR RESILIENCE TO COPE WITH THE TRAUMA THEY EXPERIENCE

GOOD TEACHING AND LEARNING ENCOURAGE RELATIONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND THEIR STUDENTS. THESE RELATIONSHIPS PLACE TEACHERS AT RISK OF VICARIOUS TRAUMATISATION

IN THE FACE OF COMPASSION FATIGUE AND VICARIOUS TRAUMA, WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROTECT TEACHERS AND PREVENT BURNOUT?

