The Human Cost
Who am I?

- Director of Forensics at Digital Discovery
- Community SANS Instructor
- Sometimes Podcaster
- Most photoshopped forensicator in history

I DON'T ALWAYS POST PICTURES OF MYSELF

BUT WHEN I DO SOME BASTARD PHOTOSHOPS IT
WARNING

If you’re easily offended this might not be the room for you.
“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”

Friedrich Nietzsche
Exposure To...

Child sexual abuse/exploitation
Physical violence
Acts of terrorism
Mutilation
Rape
Death
Pornography
Any combination of the above
Consequences
“The brain is a wonderful organ; it starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office.”

Robert Frost
Recall

• The more shocking the reaction, the deeper the memory
• “Flashbulb” memories are vivid and easier to recall
Does Pornography Rewire Your Brain?

Stimulant in

Pleasure out
Suppression

Arousal

Stimulant in

Sexual Performance

Aggression out
Image Detection
Aggression

Violence in

Violence in

Violence in

Aggression out
Stress Amplification

Normal Person’s Latent Stress Level

Network Admin’s Latent Stress Level

Forensicator’s Latent Stress Level
Stress Amplification
Exposure to Images of Child Sexual Abuse

Fear of Traumatizing Others
Psychosexual Issues
Emotional Distress
Exhaustion

Intrusive Thoughts
Nightmares
Stigma
Fear of Judgment

Burnout
Relationship Issues

Distrust
Anxiety

Over-Protectiveness

Cynicism
Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder

Symptoms are almost identical to PTSD (which kills 22 vets a day)
Can be caused by prolonged exposure to disturbing imagery
Usually begins with burnout and goes from there
May also include vicarious traumatization
Survey Results

Working with child sexual abuse images:

– Has a negative impact on forensicators’ lives
– Causes them to come to mind unbidden
– Makes you overprotective of your own children
– Is disturbing but rewarding
– Seems to become easier over time
– *Can* interfere in your sex life
– Requires a strong support system
Coping Mechanisms

Typically DON’T Work
Pretending you’re immune
Ignoring the problem
Compartmentalizing
Isolating yourself
Trying to deal with it on your own
Mocking others that seek help
Feeling like a failure for asking for help

“When I was a forensicator I coped with disturbing material by doing these things...”
Coping Mechanisms

Typically DO Work
Discussion – Almost everyone feels this way
Taking advantage of psychological support/counseling
Taking regular breaks
Requesting training
Surrounding yourself with understanding people
Engaging in extra-curricular activities/hobbies
Exercising (look at me for inspiration)
Spending time with family
Positive thoughts (yes, really)
Group Discussions
If your employer isn’t helping

YOU’RE DOING IT WRONG
“the presence of supportive relationships in the lives of agency employees was related to better psychological well-being”
Questions?

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