

COMPASSION FATIGUE

SOAR Conference – November 2, 2017

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COMPASSION FATIGUE

- * Compassion fatigue is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of one's ability to feel empathy or compassion towards others over time.

Compassion Fatigue is the combination of:

Primary Traumatic Stress—

Accumulation of stressful life events

+

Secondary Traumatic Stress—

Being overwhelmed by the repeated exposure of trauma of others

+

Cumulative Stress (Burnout)—

State of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion

- Figley

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

a very brief review

The long term physical and psychological effects of experiencing or witnessing trauma.

These responses include:

- * Intense fear
- * Helplessness
- * Horror

PTSD

Common Symptoms

- * Recurring and intrusive memories
- * Recurring nightmares, sleep disturbances
- * Dissociation
- * Physical reactions to trauma triggers

PTSD

Common Symptoms

- * Avoiding thoughts and feelings associated with trauma
- * Reduced ability to feel tender emotions
- * Anxiety, anger outbursts
- * Hyper vigilance

PTSD

Common Symptoms

- * Hopelessness
- * Isolation
- * Difficulty concentrating
- * Disintegration of personal relationships

adapted from DSM IV
DSM V

COMPASSION FATIGUE MAP

Range of Emotions	Life Looks Like This	Prevention/Management
<p>Resilient</p> <p>Joyful Happy Enthusiastic Content</p>	<p>Engaged in your community. Active. Confident. Work is satisfying. Strong support system. Healthy boundaries. Happy, loving home. Undisturbed sleep. Rare use of comfort substances.</p>	<p>Ask for help promptly. Embrace life's challenges. Self-aware, Values and integrity. Maximise physical health. Regular exercise. Well practiced Stress Management skills. High self-esteem. Spiritually engaged. Strong sense of inner guidance.</p>
<p>At Risk</p> <p>Bored Frustrated Disappointed Overwhelmed</p>	<p>Too busy. Boundaries blurred. Heightened Stress Response. Minor illnesses Work is unsatisfying. Feeling socially and emotionally isolated. Addictive/compulsive behaviours. Gallows humour, retail therapy, debt. Personal relationships suffering. Spiritual life neglected. Poor eating habits. Disrupted sleep. Increased use of comfort substances.</p>	<p>Seek professional assistance with experienced Compassion Fatigue Specialist without delay. Practice Stress Management Techniques. Decrease/eliminate caffeine/sugar intake. Pursue relaxing exercise. Re-evaluate career path. Reconnect with spiritual practice. Monitor use of comfort substances.</p>
<p>In Danger</p> <p>Pessimistic Angry Depressed Powerless</p>	<p>Irritable, shut down. Rapid thought processes. Frequently triggered Stress Response. Work means nothing/everything. Quick fix eating. Unhealthy boundaries. Compromised immune system. Significant health concerns. Relationships disintegrating. Deep debt. No spiritual practice. No emotional reserves, exhausted. Adrenaline junky. No safe haven. Victim perspective. Serious substance abuse. Suicidal thoughts.</p>	<p>Acknowledge the situation and seek professional help IMMEDIATELY (Counselling, Doctor, Rehab). You need help to connect your feelings to Compassion Fatigue. Low self-esteem. Loss of integrity, values No inner sense of guidance. Be gentle with yourself.</p> <p>NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR ABILITY TO HEAL.</p>

COMPASSION FATIGUE

- * Can affect staff and adjudicators that often hear disturbing stories and/or horrific events.
- * Actively listening to someone express details of their pain can be intense.
- * It can affect your physical and emotional well-being.

AWARENESS

- ☞ Is it affecting your:
 - ☞ ability to perform at work?
 - ☞ attendance?
 - ☞ interactions with others?
 - ☞ ability to meet deadlines?

SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- * Do you have supportive people around you that you can debrief with after you have heard a difficult case? (e.g. a mentor, co-worker, EAP)
- * Do you leave work behind when you go home at night?

SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- * Are you involved in professional or social organizations where you can discuss mutual problems with others?
- * Do you practice relaxation techniques to reduce stress? (e.g. massage, yoga, exercise, meditation)
- * Can you take a break or ask for scheduling changes at work?

TIPS

- * Do not suffer in isolation.
- * You need to talk about it and ask for help.
- * This is not an issue of competence.

TIPS

Prevention/management requires a collaborative approach

http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html

Compassion satisfaction/fatigue/burnout

Questionnaire available in 17 languages. Free for general use.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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