Recognizing & Managing Compassion Fatigue

Empower Idaho
Webinar, June 18, 2018
2:00 – 3:30 pm

2018 Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project
Today’s Agenda: Recognizing & Managing Compassion Fatigue

- What is Compassion Fatigue?
- On the Job Stresses & Burnout
- Compassion Fatigue in the Workplace
- Managing Compassion Fatigue
- Strategies to Promote Wellness
- Resources
The ultimate goal in creating healthy caregivers is so we can master the art of resiliency and return quickly to high-functioning behaviors after enduring a traumatic event or incident.
Why Healthy Caregiving?

Life is not merely to be alive, but to be well.

Marcus Valerius Martial
Seven Forms of Human Wellness

Physical    Emotional    Spiritual    Social
Intellectual    Environmental    Occupational

When creating a Self-Care Plan, choose one area of wellness to begin your journey. Which area of improved wellness will be most beneficial to you?
What is Compassion Fatigue?

“Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper.”

Dr. Charles Figley
Professor, Paul Henry Kurzweg Distinguished Chair
Director, Tulane Traumatology Institute
Tulane University, New Orleans
What is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion Fatigue is a combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion associated with the trauma-related work we do where people or animals are in significant emotional pain and/or physical distress.
What are the Symptoms?

- Isolation
- Emotional outbursts
- Sadness, apathy
- Impulse to rescue anyone in need
- Persistent physical ailments
- Substance abuse
- Hypervigilance, hyperarousal
- Recurring nightmares or flashbacks
- Excessive complaints about colleagues, management, and/or those being helped
What is Compassion Fatigue?

“I just want to be left alone. There is always someone wanting something from me and I have nothing left to give.”

- Carole M. / Social Worker
What is Compassion Fatigue?

“Every time I hear the bell go off, my pulse races, my heart beats so fast I think it’s going to jump out of my chest. I try to breathe deeply to calm myself down, but I can’t even catch my breath.”

- Ken W. / 30-Year Firefighter Veteran

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What is Compassion Fatigue?

“I sometimes wonder why I work in elder care. There really isn’t much hope for the future of the residents. They arrive and they never leave. I watch the families and friends suffer because they know with 100% accuracy that they are constantly saying goodbye to their loved one. Loss after loss after loss leaves me empty.”

- Matt B./Manager, 15 years in elder care facility
What is Compassion Fatigue?

“I’m getting to the point where I don’t even want to go to sleep at night. I see images of the day that both frighten and upset me – almost every night.”

- Graciela V. / ER Nurse
What are the Causes?

- Other-Directedness: Putting the needs of others before our own
- Providing service to others w/stress & work-related trauma
- Lack of personal and/or professional coping skills
- Lack of personal boundaries
- Overdeveloped sense of responsibility
- Practice of minimizing traumatic events
- History of unresolved childhood trauma

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"Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways."

Sigmund Freud
## On the Job Stresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is about being anxious: work-related overload, too much</td>
<td>is about being worn out: work-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy, too little</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTSD</th>
<th>STS</th>
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<tr>
<td>is a primary stress disorder: work-related exposure to extreme or traumatic events</td>
<td>is a secondary stress disorder: Work-related secondary exposure to extreme or traumatic events involving people or animals</td>
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Managing Stress

✓ Identify your source(s) of stress
✓ Educate yourself about the effects of stress on YOUR body, mind and spirit
✓ Identify unhealthy coping methods
✓ Adopt healthy coping mechanisms
✓ Tighten your personal boundaries
✓ Practice empathic discernment
Learn to Protect Yourself...

on and off the job.
Remember...

YOUR BODY HEARS EVERYTHING YOUR MIND SAYS.
Physical Ailments

“Society has not woken fully to the frequency with which people unconsciously think themselves ill. Psychosomatic disorders are physical symptoms that mask emotional distress. There are many people whose sadness is so overwhelming that they cannot bear to feel it. In its place, they develop physical disabilities. When words are not available, our bodies sometimes speak for us.”

-Suzanne O’Sullivan MD
Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. As such, early experiences are an important public health issue. Much of the foundational research in this area has been referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and has been linked to

- risky health behaviors,
- chronic health conditions,
- low life potential, and
- early death.

- As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these outcomes.

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History of Unresolved Childhood Trauma revisited...

- Confused
- Overwhelmed
- Worried
- Anxious
- Saddened
- Out of Control
- Helpless
- Hopeless
- Fearful
- Hypervigilant
Organizational Compassion Fatigue exists when a high percentage of staff exhibit elevated levels of Compassion Fatigue. This leads to a loss of meaning of the organization’s mission. Dysfunction seeps into the processes and procedures that keep the organization focused, productive and healthy.
What are the Symptoms of Organizational CF?

- High absenteeism
- Elevated rate of Workers Comp Claims
- Lack of flexibility
- Tendency to break rules
- “Us versus Them” mentality
- Strong reluctance to change
- Lack of vision for the future
- Undermining the mission of the organization
Strategies for Managing Compassion Fatigue

- Create balance between work, relationships & “me-time”
- Build a healthy support system
- Practice authentic, sustainable self-care daily
- Stay in the complexity of the crisis situation – practice mindfulness
- Recognize Emotional Vampires
- Simplify your life
- Strengthen resiliency coping skills
- Create a Personal Mission Statement & Self-Care Plan (DOT)
  - Take the Professional Quality of Life Self-Test regularly
  - Stop Sliming
  - Elevate Compassion Satisfaction Levels
Mindfulness

The quality or state of being mindful; the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.
Mindfulness

This is why the dog is happier
The Canadian police meditating before starting the day to deal with situations more calmly without agitation
“Energy vampires are people who suck our energy dry. Everyone can benefit from skills on how to cope with them. You can especially benefit if you are an intuitive empath, who absorbs the pain and negativity of others into your body – and become exhausted by it.” – Dr. Judith Orloff
10 Factors in Building Resiliency

- Be Optimistic
- Be Flexible
- Identify your core value system
- Have faith
- Identify positive role models
- Use your intelligence
- Face your fears
- Find meaning in difficult times
Creating a Self-Care Plan

- Take the time to create a plan for yourself.
- Write ONE measurable, accountable goal**

**DOT
Set One Measurable, Accountable Goal

- I will go to the gym Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 45 minutes
- I will take a nutrition class this spring and apply what I learn to my daily diet
- I will lose 10 lbs in 3 months by keeping my calorie intake at 1500 calories daily

Hold yourself accountable!
A DREAM written down with a date becomes a GOAL.

A GOAL broken down into steps becomes a PLAN.

A PLAN backed by ACTION becomes REALITY.
Personal Mission Statement Examples

- Kindness before everything else.
- Actively listen not to respond, but to understand.
- Love is all I need.
- Humor will see me through.
- Start slow and taper off.
- Everyone counts.
- Wake up daily with a grateful heart.
Professional Quality of Life

- Compassion Satisfaction
  "the good stuff"

- Compassion Fatigue
  "the bad stuff"
  - Burnout
  - Secondary Trauma
When helpers hear and see difficult things in the course of their work, the most normal reaction in the world is to want to debrief with someone, to alleviate a little bit of the burden that they are carrying. It is healthy to turn to others for support and validation. The problem is that we are often not doing it properly. The problem is also that colleagues don’t always ask us for permission before debriefing their stories with us.
What is Compassion Satisfaction?

“Compassion Satisfaction is the pleasure we derive from doing the caregiving work we do. Higher levels of Compassion Satisfaction lead to becoming healthier, more effective caregivers.”

Source: Dr. Beth Hudnall Stamm
What is Compassion Satisfaction?

- The positive aspects of caregiving
- Pleasure & satisfaction derived from caregiving.

Compassion Satisfaction may be related to:
- Creating positive experiences and outcomes for those in our care.
- Working as a team with family members or colleagues.
- Being able to share our experiences and knowledge with others.
- Recognizing that caregiving is a gift and the caregiver also benefits from the kindness.
Best Practices for Management

- Educate staff about Compassion Fatigue
- Create a space for meditation or silence
- Debrief as a group after a traumatic event
- Allow staff to have input to improve the working environment
- Create an organizational Wellness Program
- Practice MBWA- Rounding
- Offer nutritious food at meetings and events
- Take lunch breaks daily & breathers throughout the day
- Learn to recognize Organizational Compassion Fatigue

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On-the-Spot Self Care Practices

- Breathe deeply
- Laugh
- Journal
- Take a brisk walk
- Stretch
- Talk to a trusted friend

- Eat a nutritious snack
- Practice Letting Go ritual
- Meditate/pray
- Read a favorite quote or Mission statement
- Listen to music
Six Steps to Healthy Caregiving

1. Build Resiliency
2. Cultivate Compassion
3. Improve Coping Skills
4. Support Your Colleagues
5. Embrace Self-Confidence
6. Manage Change

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## Ten Words to Live By

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>Emotional reaction following a difficult event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Opening our hearts to the suffering of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Upon seeing suffering, we are moved to act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion Fatigue</td>
<td>Secondary traumatic stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion Satisfaction</td>
<td>The pleasure we derive from caregiving work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resiliency</td>
<td>Ability to bounce back after a traumatic event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Finding your True North – the real you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>The behaviors &amp; actions that carry us through</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>Being fully open to a wide range of emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Caregiving</td>
<td>The ability to be fully present/in the moment</td>
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Compassion Fatigue Resources

- www.compassionfatigue.org
- www.healthycaregiving.com
- www.facebook.com/compassionfatigue
- www.tedxsanjuanisland.com/2016/
- www.proqol.org
- www.drjudithorloff.com
- www.brenebrown.com
- www.greatergood.berkeley.edu
A thought from author Henry James...

“Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.”
What Kindness Doesn’t Look Like…

THE BEATINGS WILL CONTINUE
UNTIL MORALE IMPROVES!
What Kindness Does Look Like…

COME IN...

Don't put your coffee down.

PLEASE TOUCH EVERYTHING!

XOXO

YES! Your dog is welcome too!
And this...
And this...
And this...
And this...
And this...
And this…
And this...

I admire people
Who barely have anything but share it nevertheless.
True Heroism...

“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.”

- Arthur Ashe
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