What About Me?! Helping Professionals Overcome Compassion Fatigue/Vicarious Trauma



Randee Kogan, M.S., L.M.H.C. & Loren Berry, Psy.D. Thursday, November 3rd, 2016

Objectives:



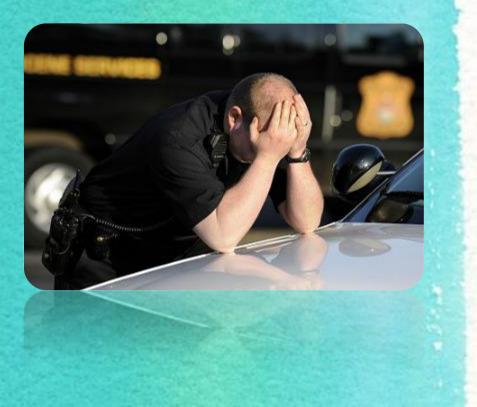
1) Define compassion fatigue

2) Recognize symptoms related to compassion fatigue

3) Identify and implement interventions to prevent & cope with compassion fatigue

What is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion Fatigue



The cumulative <u>physical</u>, <u>emotional</u>, <u>and/or psychological</u> <u>effects</u> of continual exposure to stories of trauma and suffering when working in a helping field

(American Bar Association, n.d.)

Is Burnout Different?



Yes!

•Similar symptoms, but <u>not</u> related to exposure to trauma and suffering

•Caused from prolonged, yet unsuccessful striving toward unrealistic expectations

Anyone can experience it

(Teater & Lugate, 2014)

So how do we know if we have Compassion Fatigue?

Physical Symptoms:

- Physical exhaustion
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Headaches and migraines
- Stomach complaints
- Muscle tension
- Elevated blood pressure



(Teater & Lugate, 2014)

Behavioral:



Increased use of alcohol and drugs
Other addictions
Absenteeism
Anger and

irritability

Seeing yourself as indespensable
Avoidance of clients

Behavioral continued:

 Impaired ability to make decisions

Forgetfulness

 Problems in personal relationships Compromised care for clients





Psychological:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Distancing
- Negative selfimage
- Depression
- Reduced empathy

 Dread of working with certain clients

- Feeling professional hopelessness
- Disruption of worldview

Psychological continued:

- Hypervigilence
- Hypersensitivity or insensitivity to emotional material
- Cynicism

 Difficulty separating personal and professional lives Failure to nurture and develop nonwork-related aspects of life



Beyond the Cliff Laura van Dernoot Lipsky



Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the <u>last 30 days</u>.

l=Nev	ver 2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Often	5=Very Often
I.	l am happy.			
2.	l am preoccupied with more than one person I [help]. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.			
3.				
4.	I feel connected to others.			
5.	I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.			
 6.	I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].			
 7.	I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].			
8.	I am not as productive at			-
_	of a person I [help].			
9.	I think that I might have b	een affected by the traun	natic stress of t	hose [helþ].

So how do we prevent or cope with Compassion Fatigue?

Self-Care Assessment Worksheet

This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve.

Using the scale below, rate the following areas in terms of frequency:

- 5 = Frequently 4 = Occasionally
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = It never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- ____ Eat healthy
- ____ Exercise
- ____ Get regular medical care for prevention
- ____ Get medical care when needed
- ____ Take time off when needed
 - Get massages



Identify Work Hazards Set Boundaries Use Healthy Escapes Improve Work Environment Talk about compassion fatigue with co-workers & supervisors

Seek Personal Therapy

(Norcross & Guy, 2007)



Mental Focus Exercise

Stare at any object and try to remain focused on just that object for as long as possible. Keep a mental watch on when your mind starts to wander, then just bring it back to the object. The longer you can remain focused, the more your mindfulness will increase.

Musical Stimuli Exercise

Listen to your favorite song and pay attention to how it makes you feel. What emotions stir? What memories come up, and how do those memories make you feel? Engage the emotions and see where they lead.



(Simple Mindfulness Exercises, n.d.)

Guided Meditation

(5 Minute Mindfulness Meditation, 2015)

References

5 Minute Mindfulness Meditation (for Beginners). (2015, April 17). Technotox video retrieved from https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDu4-dyA7DE.

American Bar Association (n.d.). Compassion fatigue. Retrieved from http://www.americanbar.org/groups/ lawyerassistance/resources /compassion_fatigue.html

Norcross, J. C., & Guy J. D. (2007). *Leaving it at the office: A guide to psychotherapist self-care.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Simple Mindfulness Exercises (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.practicingmindfulness.com/16-simple-mindfulnessexercises.

Teater , M., & Lugate, J. (2014). *Overcoming compassion fatigue: A practical resilience workbook*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing & Media.