

# Managing Compassion Fatigue for Professionals

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# What does Compassion Fatigue Look Like?



# Objectives

- Compassion Fatigue
  - Looking inward
  - Looking outward
- What is it?
- Signs and Symptoms
- Sources of Pressure
- Resistance to Self-Care
- Self-Care and Personal Plan



# Two Viewpoints

- Looking Inward
  - How am I doing?
  - Symptoms?
  - Self-care ideas?
- Looking Outward
  - Recognizing and distinguishing signs in employees, friends, family, clients, patients
  - Understanding resistance
  - Planning effective self-care



# Compassion Stress

Stress

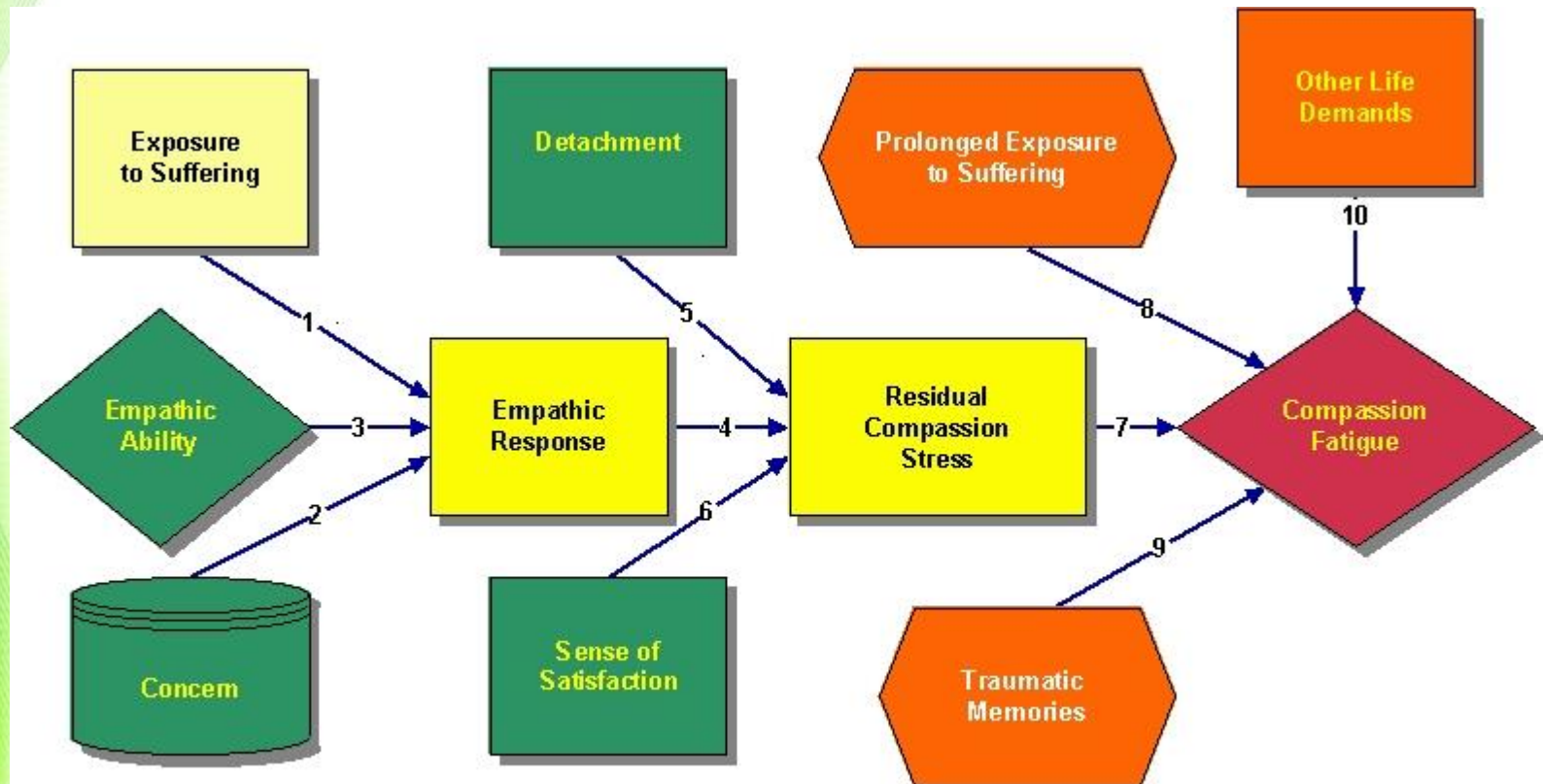
Compassion  
Stress

Compassion  
Fatigue

Burnout



# Compassion Fatigue Model



The Compassion Fatigue Process (Figley, 2001)

# Compassion Stress

A set of Psychosocial and Emotional factors

- Caused by a specific event or series of events,
- Affecting helpers indirectly through another person – family, friend, patient, or employee.

It sometimes takes only one event to have a lasting effect -

Secondary or vicarious trauma – indirect exposure.

# Compassion Fatigue

A state of exhaustion and dysfunction (biologically, psychologically, and socially) as a result of **prolonged exposure** to compassion stress.





# Burnout

Exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation, usually the result of prolonged stress or frustration.



# Comparing Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

## Compassion Fatigue

- Preoccupation with work
- Quicker onset
- May lead to burnout

## Burnout

- Subtle and gradual
- Negative feelings
- Feeling unsuited to work
- Cynical



# Questions

- Even though you are a physician, social worker or trained healthcare provider with a successful career, you can still experience compassion fatigue.
- The fact that you have ongoing exposure to traumatic material, even if you've seen it all and done it all...you're still at risk.
- What signs do you see in yourself when you are worn out or fatigued from your job?
- How are your most difficult work encounters impacted by your stress?

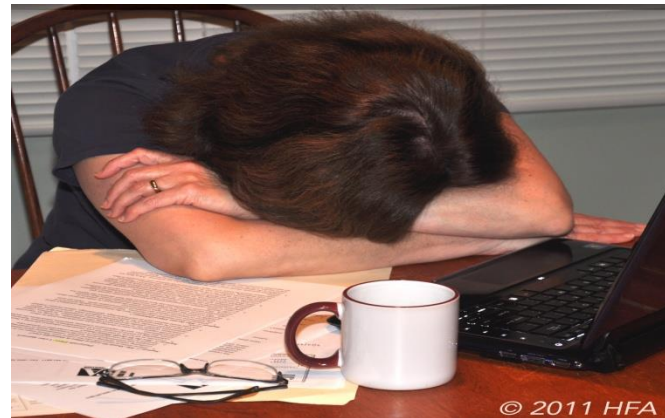


# Feeling the Effects

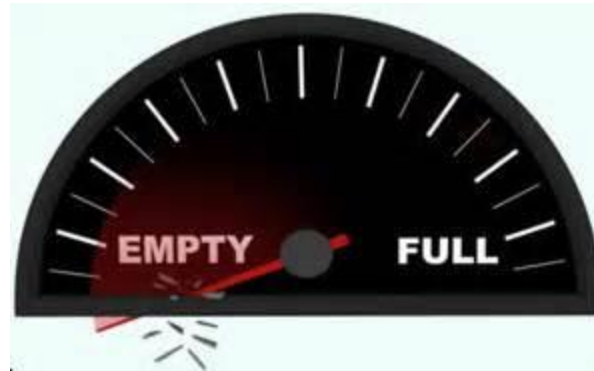
- Lowered function in non-professional situations
- Loss of hope
- Subtle manipulation of discussion to avoid painful/traumatic material
- Loss of confidence
- Difficulty separating work and personal life
- Dread about work
- Ineffective or self destructive self-soothing behaviors (alcohol)


# More Signs and Symptoms

- Macabre or lost sense of humor
- Losing track of time
- Seeing disturbing scenes in mind, awake or asleep
- Emotions on the surface
- Diminished capacity for
  - Intimacy
  - Communication
  - Sense of purpose
  - Effectiveness



# Let's Test Your Level of Compassion Fatigue/Compassion Satisfaction





Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)  
Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue Version 5 (2009 - 2012)  
B. Hudnall Stamm  
Please take the test and self score. Note that Burnout items are reverse scored

Your answers should reflect your experiences in the last 30 days.

Based on your personal scores you can look at how you measure in:

1.) Compassion Satisfaction	Low	Average	High
2.) Burnout	Low	Average	High
3.) Secondary Traumatic Stress	Low	Average	High

Further insights into your score can be found on page 2 of the test. If you have concerns about your score, please discuss them with a mental health professional.



# Add the total scores for the items

## **Compassion Satisfaction Level:**

- 43 or less =Low
- Around 50 =Average
- 57 or more =High

- **Burnout Level:**

- 43 or less = Low
- Around 50 = Average
- 57 or more = High

## **Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (circle):**

- 43 or less = Low
- Around 50 = Average
- 57 or more = High

## Chart by circling the score categories for your assessed level of risk

Level of Risk	Burnout Level	Secondary Traumatic Stress Level	Compassion Satisfaction Level
High/Extremely High	57 or more	57 or more	57 or more
Moderate	Around 50	Around 50	Around 50
Low/Extremely Low	43 or less	43 or less	43 or less

# What internal and external pressures are most stressful for you?

What can you do?

Are you resistant to self-care?



"Empathy? Compassion? I have medication for that."

# Potential Stressors



- Patients with highly complex mental and physical problems
- Asking more of employees who are stretched thin
- High census
- Placement and discharge challenges

# Resistance to Self Care

- Four Types of Reluctance
- Worker Bee Mentality
- The Change Phobic
- The Untrusting
- The Martyr

# Worker Bee



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# Worker Bee

- “It’s all about my performance and productivity! If I needed more breaks and vacations, my organization would tell me.”

# The Change Phobic

## Managing Change



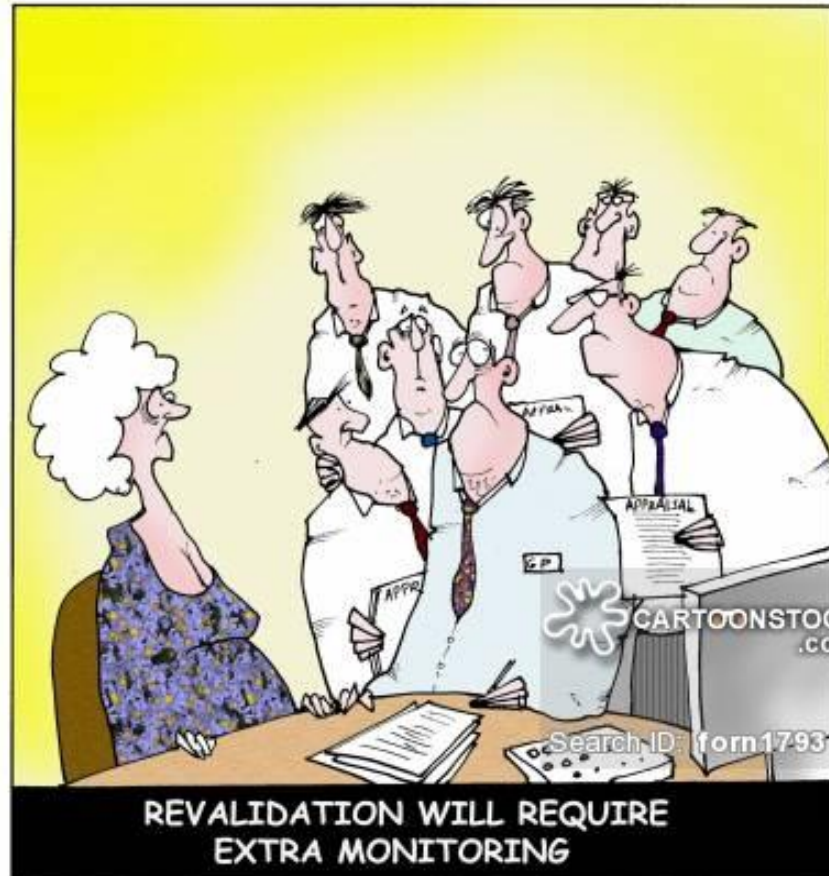
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# Change Phobic

- “I’ve been doing it like this for the past X number of years. I am just fine. Admitting I am not fine – means admitting I may need help.”

# The Untrusting



# The Untrusting

- “I can’t take the time for myself....what will happen while I’m gone? Will they replace me? What will others think? Will they think I can’t do my job?”

# The Martyr



**"It says, 'I am a workaholic — if found, send on vacation.'"**

CN  
COLLECTION

**It says 'I am a workaholic-----if  
found send on vacation'.**

# Factors that protect you from Compassion Fatigue

- Hardiness and Resilience
- Well developed social support network
- Authentic and sustainable self care plan

# Self-Care and Personal Plan

- Physical Self-Care
- Emotional Self-Care
- Social Self-Care
- Spiritual Self-Care



# Green Cross Academy Recommendations

1. Be honest with yourself about degree of fatigue
2. Consciousness of internal locus of control
3. Take care of physical well-being
4. Reconnection with social support system
5. Constructive self-soothing behaviors
6. Work life balance
7. Appropriate grieving
8. Resolution of primary trauma
9. Regular debriefings
10. Set appropriate boundaries





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# Self-Care Notes

- Physical – Exercise, Deep Breathing, Sleep, Nutrition
- Psychological – Balance, Relaxation, Creative Expression, Life Skill, Spiritual Self Care, Humor

- Social and Interpersonal – Social Support, Staff Support, Social Activities
- Professional – Boundaries, Work Life Satisfaction and Balance

EXPERT IMPROVING  
ENHANCED EXERCISE  
TRAINING QUALITY  
CONSUMER INTENTION  
SELF SKILLS  
SMOKING PHYSICAL  
PROVIDER OPEN  
LIFE PATIENT  
PARTNERSHIP HEALTHWATCH  
HEALTH PERSONALISED  
RETURN

# Final Questions

- The cost of caring is great.
- Anyone can experience Compassion Fatigue.
- Self-care is important.
- Manage your stress and improve your work and life experience.

# Make a Plan

Write down one thing that will be helpful in reducing the impact of compassion fatigue in your life.

- Keep it small
- Keep it simple
- Keep it specific

# Avera Employee Assistance Program

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[www.averaeap.org](http://www.averaeap.org)

“Building Healthy Organizations”



Thank You