COMPASSION FATIGUE

It’s a REAL thing....
What is Compassion Fatigue?

• compassion fatigue
• noun

• indifference to charitable appeals on behalf of those who are suffering, experienced as a result of the frequency or number of such appeals.
Compassion Fatigue symptoms are normal displays of stress resulting from the care giving work you perform on a regular basis. While the symptoms are often disruptive, depressive, and irritating, an awareness of the symptoms and their negative effect on your life can lead to positive change, personal transformation, and a new resiliency. Reaching a point where you have control over your own life choices will take time and hard work. There is no magic involved. There is only a commitment to make your life the best it can be.
Normal Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- Normal symptoms present in an individual include:
  - Excessive blaming
  - Bottled up emotions
  - Isolation from others
  - Receives unusual amount of complaints from others
  - Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions
  - Substance abuse used to mask feelings
  - Compulsive behaviors such as overspending, overeating, gambling, sexual addictions
  - Poor self-care (i.e., hygiene, appearance)
  - Legal problems, indebtedness
  - Reoccurrence of nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic event
  - Chronic physical ailments such as gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
  - Apathy, sad, no longer finds activities pleasurable
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Mentally and physically tired
  - Preoccupied
  - In denial about problems
Organizational Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- High absenteeism
- Constant changes in co-workers relationships
  - Inability for teams to work well together
- Desire among staff members to break company rules
- Outbreaks of aggressive behaviors among staff
- Inability of staff to complete assignments and tasks
  - Inability of staff to respect and meet deadlines
    - Lack of flexibility among staff members
      - Negativism towards management
      - Strong reluctance toward change
- Inability of staff to believe improvement is possible
  - Lack of a vision for the future
What Happens??

• When Compassion Fatigue hits critical mass in the workplace, the organization itself suffers. Chronic absenteeism, spiraling Worker’s Comp costs, high turnover rates, friction between employees, and friction between staff and management are among organizational symptoms that surface, creating additional stress on workers.

• Healing an organization takes time, patience, and most important, commitment. An awareness of Compassion Fatigue and its far reaching effects must be present in management and work its way down to encompass staff.
Are We Caregivers?

YES! We are!
Once you realize that you are a candidate for compassion fatigue, or are already suffering its
effects, exploring this new awareness can lead to insights concerning past traumas, pain, and
defeating behaviors. A common and understandable coping mechanism in care giving is to simply
stuff the overwhelming emotions that surface repeatedly in your work. How else can you keep
going? Eventually, those emotions refuse to be ignored. All too often, psychological and physical
危机 occurs.
With support, insightful information, and authentic self-care, you can begin to understand the
complexity of the emotions you've been juggling and, most likely, suppressing. Most people never
take the time to understand how their jobs affect them emotionally. Give yourself credit for moving
forward and affecting change. Your hard work will pay off.
• Authentic and Sustainable Self Care Begins With You…

• Be kind to yourself.
• Enhance your awareness with education.
• Accept where you are on your path at all times.
• Understand that those close to you may not be there when you need them most.
• Exchange information and feelings with people who can validate you.
• Listen to others who are suffering.
• Clarify your personal boundaries. What works for you; what doesn’t.
• Express your needs verbally.
• Take positive action to change your environment.
Continue with Positivity

- In order to move forward on your path to wellness, you must continually commit to authentic self-care that includes:
  - Health-building activities such as exercise, massage, yoga, meditation.
  - Eating healthy foods
  - Drinking plenty of water
  - Use natural healing products to care for and heal your body
  - Practicing the art of self-management. Just say no
  - Developing a healthy support system: people who contribute to your self esteem, people who listen well, people who care
  - Organizing your life so you become proactive as opposed to reactive
  - Reserving your life energy for worthy causes. Choose your battles.
  - Living a balanced life: Sing, dance, sit with silence
Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project
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