The emotional toll of professional caregiving: Mitigating and managing Compassion Fatigue.

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- Relationship with Commercial Interest
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Objectives

• Define CF and BO

• Recognize your own signs of stress and how you cope
• ID strategies to manage stress

• Understand resilience and how this will help you cope
Compassion Fatigue & Vicarious Trauma

• A deep erosion of our compassion, of our ability to tolerate strong emotions and/or difficult stories in others

• Transformation of world view, beliefs

• Accumulate over time & across clients

• Evident in helpers’ professional and personal life

• Occupational Hazards
Burn Out

Impact on:
- Professional behaviors
- Altruism
- Medical knowledge scores
- *Risk of medical errors*

Emotional exhaustion
Depersonalization
Loss of sense of accomplishment
Collateral damage.

What else suffers when you suffer?

- Quality of patient care
- Patient safety
- Professionalism
Oh what to to, what to dooo?
Self awareness.

Your signs and symptoms will be your WARNING SIGNS
Physical Signs

- Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Somatization
- Hypochondria
### Behavioural Signs and Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased use of alcohol and drugs</th>
<th>Anger and Irritability</th>
<th>Avoidance of clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>Impaired ability to make decisions</td>
<td>Problems in personal relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attrition</td>
<td>Compromised care for clients</td>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
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</tbody>
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*Don’t Forget!!*
Psychological Signs and Symptoms

- Distancing
- Negative self image
- Depression
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Cynicism
- Resentment

Resentment Starts at a Young Age
Psychological Signs and Symptoms

- Problems with intimacy
- Intrusive imagery
- Anxiety and/or irrational fears
- Hypersensitivity to emotionally charged stimuli
- Insensitivity to emotional material
- Increased sense of personal vulnerability
- Loss of hope
- Difficulty separating personal and professional lives

Sources: Saakvitne, Figley, Gentry, Baranowsky & Dunning (1997).
Life work balance:
What’s draining you?
• Relationships
• Environment
• Body, mind, spirit
• Work
• Money
Relationships

- People in my life who drain energy
- Unreturned phone calls, e-mails, or letters…
- Unresolved conflict with a family member.
- Few quality friendships.
- Lack of a romantic partner.
- There is someone I need to forgive.
- I lack a readily available support system.
Environment

- My car is in need of cleaning and/or repair.
- My wardrobe needs updating.
- I’d like to live in a different location.
- My home is not decorated in a way that nurtures me.
- My closets and/or basement are cluttered.
- Repairs need to be done around my home.
- I watch too much television or spent too much time with media.
Body, mind, spirit

- I eat food that is not good.
- My physical appearance bothers me.
- I need to see a dentist or doctor.
- I do not get enough sleep or exercise.
- I have emotional needs that consistently go unmet.
- I have no time for books or movies.
- I lack a spiritual or religious practice in my life.
Work

• I no longer enjoy my job, I am exhausted.
• My office is disorganized.
• I’m avoiding a confrontation related to my work.
• I am not computer literate.
• I lack the admin support or office equipment that I need.
• I would like to be more creative and to suggest changes in my job environment, but there are obstacles.
• I feel overwhelmed with information that enters my life in the form of email, books, magazines, and mail.
Money

- I have tax returns that are not filed.
- I pay my bills late.
- I spend more money than I earn.
- I don’t have a plan for my financial future.
- I do not have adequate insurance coverage.
- I have debts that need to be paid off.
- My will is not up-to-date.
• Relationships
• Environment
• Body, mind, spirit
• Work
• Money
What Has Been Shown to Work?

Deceptively simple strategies:

• ABCs of basic self care: Sleep, rest, proper diet, exercise, vacations
• Activities that replenish you
• Working part time
• Life work balance
• Nourishing activities every day
• Debriefing process

70% of all cancers are lifestyle related
Sweat and laugh every day.

Gurmukh
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: An Important Tool in Mitigating Compassion Fatigue in Helpers

@ www.compassionfatigue.ca

Jon Kabat-Zinn YouTube

Strive to focus on the present
Where/how can we practice mindfulness?

- Learn how to breathe
- Body scan
- Yoga
- Day to day activities (dinner, shower etc)
- Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) programs
Active
Present
Nonjudgemental
The power of narrative.
Gratitude is absolutely the way to bring more into your life.
Resilience

Positive Emotion & Attitude

Social Support

Meaning-Making

Frederickson et al., 2003; Tugade & Frederickson, 2004; Luthar, 2006
Relationships are key.

youarenotalone.com
Enhancing meaning

• Making a difference in the lives of others

• Self doubt sometimes makes us forget what we are capable of doing.
Strategies for Wellness

**Physical**
* get a family MD
* sleep, rest, diet, exercise
* choose ONE thing

**Psychological**
* reflect (narrative)
* ID depression etc and get help
* address old hurts, traumas

**Social/Cultural**
* connect with friends,
* help each other
* reach out, debrief
* find a mentor

**Spiritual**
* connect with nature or other spiritual or religious connection
* seek support
* address grief
* get help for transitions
Self Care
Be the change you want to see in the World.

-Mahatma Gandhi
The heart must first pump blood to itself.

Shapiro, 2008
Remind yourself that it’s okay not to be perfect.
Goalify.

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.
The choice is yours.