

Compassion Fatigue: What Can We Do About It?

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Professional Development



Your Presenters



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We partner with communities
to support people of all ages
to navigate life's challenges
through personalized prevention,
intervention, treatment, and recovery.



Objectives

- Discuss things to do or not to do when experiencing compassion fatigue.
- Learn several exercises to practice self-compassion.
- Learn how to set boundaries to achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Commercial break



Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue: Review

Compassion Satisfaction: The pleasure and satisfying feeling that comes from helping others.

Compassion Fatigue: Emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others.

Common Signs/Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue: loss of sleep, increased intensity of emotions, changes in behavior, and more.

Compassion Fatigue Prevention ABCs:

- **Awareness:** Know what is stressful for you and understand how you react to those stressors
- **Balance:** Find sources of energy and healing
- **Connections:** Find support systems at work and at home

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue: ProQOL

Professional Quality of Life Scale

- Compassion for others can affect you in positive and negative ways.
- Levels of Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Trauma scored as low, moderate, high

Compassion Fatigue: What to do about it

DOs:

- Seek social support at work and home
- Schedule self-care/self-compassion
- Spend some time alone relaxing or outside
- Understand that this is normal for helpers

Compassion Fatigue: What to do about it

DOs:

- Have at least one focused conversation each day
- Move your body every day
- Have a good routine in order to promote sleep
- Set healthy boundaries

Compassion Fatigue: What to do about it

DON'Ts:

- Blame others
- Make big changes at work or home
- Complain to co-workers frequently
- Work harder or work longer hours

Compassion Fatigue: What to do about it

DON'Ts:

- Neglect your own needs
- Try a quick fix
- Self-medicate

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Compassion Fatigue: Self Care

Self-care: Doing things to take care of our minds, bodies, and souls by engaging in activities that promote well-being and reduce stress.

Examples:

- Cook or bake
- Exercise
- Get a massage
- Take a walk outside
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Read a book or magazine
- Create something
- Play a game
- Take a few deep breaths

Compassion Fatigue: Self Compassion

Self-compassion: Treating yourself with warmth and understanding in difficult times and recognizing that making mistakes is part of being human.

Compassion Fatigue: Self Compassion

How Would You Treat A Friend?

1. Think about a time when a close friend is really feeling bad about themselves. Write down what you would do and say - even note the tone you use.
2. Think about times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling. How do you respond to yourself in these situations? Write down what you typically do and say - note the tone you use.
3. Do you see a difference? If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently?
4. Write down how you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you respond to a close friend when you are suffering.

Compassion Fatigue: Self Compassion

Self-compassion Break:

- Bring to mind a situation in your life that is causing you stress or pain. Think about this situation and how it makes you feel, both emotionally and physically.
- Once you have that situation in mind, say to yourself:
 - This is a moment of suffering.
 - Suffering is a part of life.
 - May I be kind to myself.
- Relief comes from affirming that you are experiencing suffering and stating your intention to be kind to yourself.

Compassion Fatigue: Self Compassion

Changing Your Critical Self-Talk:

1. Notice when you are being critical of yourself - take note of the words, tone, phrases that you use with yourself.
2. Challenge the negative self-talk. Talk back to the critical voice in your head. Ask the critical voice to allow your compassionate self to speak.
3. Reframe the observations made by the critical voice. Put them in a more positive perspective.

Commercial break

Compassion Fatigue: Healthy Boundaries

Healthy boundaries encourage dedicated time for work and dedicated time to refuel and recharge.

Healthy boundaries are both physical and emotional.

Compassion Fatigue: Healthy Boundaries

To Set Healthy Boundaries:

1. Understand your worth and values
 - have an awareness and appreciation of what you can offer.
2. Be clear and concise.

Compassion Fatigue: Healthy Boundaries

To Set Healthy Boundaries:

3. Manage expectations and ask for clarity.
4. Identify non-negotiables.

Compassion Fatigue: Wrap Up

- If you have not yet taken the ProQOL assessment - do
- DOs and DON'Ts of dealing with compassion fatigue
- Self-care
- Self-compassion
- Healthy boundaries

Questions?

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Compassion Fatigue

Resources used for this presentation

<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/compassion-fatigue-proqol.org>

<https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue>

<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/Compassion-Fatigue-Symptoms>

<https://www.tendacademy.ca/what-is-compassion-fatigue/>

<https://positivepsychology.com/self-compassion-exercises-worksheets/>

<https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2000/0400/p39.html>

<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/running-low-on-empathy-how-to-heal-from-compassion-fatigue-1115197>

<https://ideas.ted.com/how-to-set-clear-work-boundaries-jayne-hardy/>

<https://www.agacgfm.org/CMSSiteImages/Chapters/Chapters/Idaho-Centennial-Chapter/libraries/files/Healthy%20Boundaries%20in%20the%20Workplace.pdf>