


Compassion Fatigue Workshop Summary

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Vicarious Trauma	Compassion Fatigue	Resilience
Acute visceral reactions to exposure of trauma, graphic stories, crisis, pain & suffering of others.	Cumulative build up over time due to prolonged exposure to grief, pain, trauma & stress.	The ability to “bounce” rather than “break” when faced with stress, trauma & suffering.

<p>Increase self-awareness</p> <p><u>Moral Distress/Conflict:</u> Inconsistency between our beliefs/values and what we are faced with in the workplace. Policies, politics, systemic issues, conflicts and morale dilemmas cause added stress and distress.</p> <p><u>Decision Fatigue:</u> Brain becomes fatigued from multiple, complex & difficult decisions, each expending executive command energy exhausting the pre-frontal cortex.</p> <p><u>What is going on for you?</u> Be aware of stresses in personal life, primary trauma triggers, relationship & financial issues all impact risk for Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma.</p> <p>Know your warning signs: <u>Physical:</u> headaches, back/neck pain, teeth grinding, eye twitch, sleep problems <u>Emotional:</u> anxiety, depression, anger, hopeless & helpless, numb, irritable <u>Behavioural:</u> drug & alcohol use, impaired decision making, perfectionism, overcompensating, absenteeism, avoidance</p> <p>Do you recognize when you are stressed? Would someone else?</p> <p><u>Recommended Reading:</u></p> <p><i>When the Body Says ‘NO!’ -the cost of hidden stress</i>, Dr. Gabor Maté</p> <p><i>Help for the Helper; the Psychophysiology of Compassion Fatigue & Vicarious Trauma</i>, Dr. Babette Rothschild</p> <p><i>Daring Greatly</i>, Dr. Brené Brown</p> <p><i>Gratitude & Trust</i>, Paul Williams & Tracey Jackson</p> <p><i>The Happiness Advantage</i>, Shawn Achor</p>	 <p><i>“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to walk through water without getting wet.”</i></p> <p>-Dr. Rachel Remen <i>Kitchen Table Wisdom</i></p> <p><u>Remember:</u> Keep an eye on your G.A.S. Meter!</p>
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Identify what you can change

Are we “*Sliming*” each other?

Low Impact Debriefing:

- 1) Self-Awareness (why now, what’s triggered, how do I feel?)
- 2) Fair Warning (prepare before venting/debriefing)
- 3) Get Consent (get permission before unloading your burden)
- 4) Low Impact Debrief (start from the outer edge, how you are doing, the gory details are not necessary for relief)

Compassion Fatigue Strategies:

- 1) Know your stressors, vulnerabilities & strengths
- 2) Enhance self-care (physical, emotional/spiritual, psychological, professional)
- 3) Develop resilience training techniques (mindfulness & relaxation)
- 4) Make a commitment to implement changes

Recommended Reading:

Trauma Stewardship – an everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others, Laura VanDernoot-Lipsky



Effective low impact debriefing validates feelings of fear, helplessness, and our human vulnerabilities often triggered by trauma work.

Decide where to begin

Where will your stress lead you?

What is your Resilience Building Activity?

Resilience Tool Kit:

- 1) Tool Belt: (have on you at times) music, laughter, book, Life Savours
- 2) Power Tools: gym membership, musical instrument, hobby, recreational activity which is scheduled, often with others
- 3) Tool Bench: planned events, vacation, date nights, massage, counselling

Resilience Building Activities:

mini-mindful vacations (suck a mint!), laugh, dance, cry, sing out loud, gardening, cycling, walk the dog (borrow a dog), running, sports, knitting, reading for pleasure, play a musical instrument, painting, de-clutter a room, massage therapy, say “NO” without guilt, yoga, mindfulness meditations



Stop, Breathe & Think App

- great tools available to help with guided mindfulness

Recommended Resources:

- positive, life-affirming, inspirational or funny videos & jokes which ignite your spirit will add to resilience building



Mindfulness Meditation:

“The relaxation response is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional responses to stress... and the opposite of the fight or flight response.”

- Dr. Herbert Benson, Harvard Medical School