FIRST, CARE FOR YOU!

STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND OVERCOME COMPASSION FATIGUE
Those who labor on the front lines of human experience may be haunted by images and emotions that arise in the course of a day’s work with victims of trauma.

Eileen Moon
OBJECTIVES

• Identify signs of compassion fatigue and burnout
• Identify useful ways to manage the intense emotional content of loving and caring for your children who have experienced traumatic pasts
• Identify useful ways to manage the intense emotional content working with adoptive/foster/kinship families
• Developing ways to find joy, hope, and healing in your life
WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

• Feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by suffering or misfortune accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate their pain or remove its cause.

• Over time, a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.

• Compassion fatigue spreads in a family like a virus unless families have a way to cope or think differently!
WHEN CAREGIVERS ARE STRESSED, CHILDREN ARE ASKING...

- Did I cause this to happen?
- What else will happen?
- Who will take care of me now?
- Who/What can I trust?
- Am I going to be emotionally abandoned again?
- Are you going to be there for me?
RIPPLE EFFECTS

• Futurelessness, terminal thinking
• The loss of basic trust in self and adults
• Cynicism, depression, chronic anger
• Loss of the dream that family relationships could withstand any challenge
• Loss of the dream about how a home and family “should be”
COMPASSION FATIGUE: HIDDEN DANGERS

Maintaining health and effectiveness requires attending to what’s beneath the surface.
INDICATORS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

Emotional:
- Anger
- Sadness
- Loss & grief
- Depression

Physical:
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Lethargic behavior
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Lack of motivation
INDICATORS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

Psychological:
- Self-isolation
- Irritability with family
- Cynicism
- Mood swings

Cognitive:
- Inability to focus
- Missed appointments
- Inability to think of other solutions
- Inability to problem solve
WHERE I CAME FROM

"When in danger or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout."
Paradigm Shift
HEALTHY DEVELOPMENTAL CARE

Emotional:
- See friends
- Cry and laugh
- Praise yourself
- Meditate
- Support groups
- Take respite, vacations, time away

Physical:
- Sleep well
- Eat well
- Exercise
- Walk/Jog
- Dance
- Massage/polarity
Psychological:
- Self reflect
- Read for pleasure
- Say “NO” - set limits
- Smile
- Find some solitude for yourself
- Meditate
- Yoga

Cognitive:
- Develop interest in learning new things
- Read for learning
- Be involved with a group that does not deal with care giving
- Look at global perspectives
WHERE I LANDED

"Remember, no matter what you do, I guarantee his life will be better with you than it would have been without you."
**FILL YOUR CUP**
- Quiet time for yourself
- Recharge your battery daily
- Engage in a focused, connected and meaningful conversation
- Soak in a tub
- Exercise

**PUT YOUR ARMS DOWN**
- Ask for help
- Accept help offered
- Be proactive
- Accentuate the positive
- Just say “no”
- Examine and adjust your expectations
YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOU

✓ Explore, be curious, try something new
✓ Enjoy nature
✓ Laugh, have fun
✓ Dance, play
✓ Have boundaries
✓ Support groups, networks, individuals

✓ Find balance
✓ Ability to say “no” and “let go”
✓ Will you be blissed or pissed?
✓ Don’t share in the child’s crisis
✓ Work toward realistic expectations
✓ Think differently about everyday things...look for positives
THE FOUR AGREEMENTS, DON MIGUEL RUIZ

✧ Your word needs to be impeccable
✧ Don’t follow assumptions
✧ Don’t take anything personally
✧ Do your very best
SECONDARY PTSD

- Affects about 38% of mental health professionals
- Associated with the most competent
- ↑ empathy = ↑ likelihood
- May come on suddenly or subtly
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Isolation
- Difficulty of situation
- Continually empathetic stance
- Bureaucracy
- Caregiver-induced trauma
- Vulnerability
SYMPTOMS

- Depression
- Cynicism
- Boredom
- Anxiety
- Hyper-vigilance
- Intrusive thoughts
- Numbing
IMPACT ON THINKING

- ↓ concentration, short term memory, organization
- ↓ self-esteem; ↑ put downs, self-deprecating
- Apathy
- Rigidity
- Perfectionism
- Disorientation
IMPACT ON EMOTIONAL LIFE

- Powerlessness, futility
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Anger/rage
- Numbing
- Helplessness
- Sadness
- Hypersensitivity
IMPACT ON BEHAVIOR

- ↑ Judgmental
- Disconnect
- Cynical responses
- Loss of hope and meaning
- Over-involved

- Social/emotional isolation
- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- ↑ Startle response
IMpact on spiritual life

- Search for meaning, loss of faith
- Loss of purpose
- Hopelessness
- Anger at God
IMPACT ON INTERPERSONAL LIFE

- Withdrawal from relationships
- ↓ Interest in intimacy
- Mistrust of others
- Isolation
- Avoidance of interpersonal interactions
- Overprotective parenting
- Loneliness
- ↑ Conflicts and arguments
IMPACT ON YOUR BODY

- Shock
- Sweating
- Aches and pains
- ↑ Illnesses, ↓ immunities
- Tension headaches, stomach aches
- Weight loss/weight gain
REDUCING SECONDARY TRAUMA

- Awareness: be aware of indicators of stress
- Balance: seek balance among different types of activities
- Connection: we do not heal well in isolation - need community
UNIVERSAL “ADDICTIONS” WITH BURNOUT

- Intensity: can’t slow down, even if you want to
  - I’m Dancing as Fast as I Can
- Perfection: not the same as excellence
  - Expectations for both self and others
- To KNOW: “if I know, I can do better” – not the same as wisdom
- What is Not Working: critical rather than hopeful focus
UNIVERSAL HEALING SALVES

★ Dancing
★ Singing
★ Laughing
★ Storytelling
★ Silence

Check yourself - have you stopped enjoying any of these?

- When?
- Why?
MANAGING GRIEF, ANGER, HOPELESSNESS

- Avoid parallel process
- Stay in role
- Trust others’ abilities
- Have healthy boundaries
- Separate your grief from theirs
- Know your triggers
MEETING YOUR OWN NEEDS

✓ Basic self care: sleep, time off, play
✓ Specialized training and support
✓ Supportive work environment
✓ Close relationships with colleagues
✓ Sense that your work matters
✓ Sense of humor
✓ Comforting rituals
✓ Emotional safety to share
✓ Something to look forward to
What they could try to control, though, was the exposure that was happening outside of work. When staffers told her that they kept thinking about their clients’ stories even when they were off the clock, Burke and her staff developed a 15-minute decompression exercise to help counselors “drop their worries about clients’ well-being with another worker who will be continuing on.” Before a counselor leaves her shift, she is required to tell someone still on duty all the disturbing things she heard that day, explain why they were disturbing, and list the things she’ll do to try to feel okay about it.

“This helps the counselor do two things,” Burke says. “First of all is to recognize that vicarious trauma is there and to think about what to do with that. And secondly, to feel like, ‘When I leave work I don’t have to think about all that stuff.’”
Burke’s team is now trying to retool the “leave it at work” process to work for counselors in more isolated settings, who may not have other staff to talk to after a difficult counseling session. “In that case, who do you leave your worries with?”

The answer for now seems to be: yourself. A new protocol asks counselors to record their feelings related to the work day before they punch out. The goal is immediate reflection to avoid repression of traumatic content and later rumination. So far, says Burke, “this seems to work just as well.”

CHECK IN ON YOUR OWN LEVELS
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE

1. I am happy.
2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
12. I like my work as a [helper].
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
29. I am a very caring person.
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.
**COMPASSION SATISFACTION**

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22 or less 43 or less Low
Between 23 and 41 Around 50 Average
42 or more 57 or more High
BURNOUT SCALE

*1. ____ = ____
*4. ____ = ____
8. ____
10. ____
*15. ____ = ____
*17. ____ = ____
19. ____
21. ____
26. ____
*29. ____ = ____
Total : ______

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is | So my score equals | And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
---|---|---
22 or less | 43 or less | Low
Between 23 and 41 | Around 50 | Average
42 or more | 57 or more | High

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are “reverse scored.” If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. “I am happy” tells us more about the effects of helping when you are not happy so you reverse the score.
SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

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ACTION PLAN FOR BEING GOOD TO MYSELF

How I will be good to my body:
> Every day ________________________________
> At least once a week ______________________

How I will be good to my mind:
> Every day ________________________________
> At least once a week ______________________

How I will be good to my heart/soul:
> Every day ________________________________
> At least once a week ______________________
WELCOME TO HOLLAND

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this......

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.
The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.
FEEL GREAT BY TAKING ACTION!

Family First Prevention Services Act
FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (HR 5456)

Bipartisan, Bicameral legislation Introduced 6/13/16
Passed in the House 6/21/16
Moves to Senate next week
Supports children in Grandfamilies by:

- Providing a partial federal match to states offering evidence-based Kinship Navigator programs.
- Allowing states to use federal funds to support 12 months of prevention services to keep children from needing to enter foster care, including families where a relative is caring for a child.
- Addressing barriers to licensure for relatives through the promotion of model family foster care licensing standards with a focus on ensuring states promote placements with family members.
FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (HR 5456)

- Addressing barriers to licensure for relatives through the promotion of model family foster care licensing standards with a focus on ensuring states promote placements with family members.
- Reducing the amount of time foster children wait to be adopted or placed with relatives across state lines by encouraging states to replace their outdated child placement systems with a more efficient electronic system.
- Ensuring more foster children are placed with families by ending federal reimbursement when states inappropriately place children in non-family settings.
- Promoting permanency for children by extending adoption and legal guardianship incentive payments.
FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (HR 5456)

- Reauthorizes the Regional Partnership Grant Program, which provides funding to state and local evidence-based services aimed at preventing child abuse and child neglect due to parental substance abuse.
- Extends existing child welfare services for five years through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program.
- Added - Funds for supportive services to foster families.

**NOT INCLUDED**
- short-term financial assistance to relatives, as included in previous proposals. Despite Research that shows that caregivers in grandfamilies are experienced and savvy financial managers.
- Generations United looks forward to working with Members of Congress who are championing federal and state solutions to address these ongoing financial challenges.
Kim Stevens
kimstevens@nacac.org
www.nacac.org