Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy
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# Compassion Fatigue & Self-Care

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## Compassion Fatigue

1. **How often are you tired and lacking energy to go to work in the morning?**
2. How often do you feel physically drained, as if your batteries were dead?
3. **Do you believe that working in the corrections field has changed the way you behave?**
4. How often do you struggle to think over complex problems at work?
5. **How often do you feel emotionally detached from co-workers or clients, and unable to respond to their needs?**

QUIZ

## Objectives

- Define Compassion Fatigue
- Physical Effects of Compassion Fatigue
- Hands-on Assessments
- Discuss Coping Skills and Homework

## Introductions

- Name and Position
- Write down the current three to five stressors in your personal or professional relationships?

"If your compassion doesn't **include yourself**, it is incomplete."

JACK KORNFIELD

## part I: what is compassion fatigue?

## What is Correctional Fatigue?

The condition known as **Compassion Fatigue** involves the gradual wear-and-tear of the spirit, soul and body of staff as they adapt to the demands of their workplace and career

reduced sense of personal accomplishment

Inability to cope with problems and daily activities

**Depletion of physical and intellectual energy**

**Happens when overworked, stressed, and involved in demanding situations over a long period of time**

MAY FEEL TIRED, RUNDOWN, OVERWHELMED, AND IRRITABLE

## Warning Signs for Compassion Fatigue

**Thinking or talking about suicide or harming oneself**

**prolonged depression and apathy**

**BURNOUT**

"It's not stress that kills us, it is our **reaction** to it."

HANS SELYE

## Signs & Symptoms

| | |
|---|---|
| Substance abuse | Depression |
| Sleep disturbances | Anger |
| Blaming | Chronic lateness |
| Low self-esteem | Hypertension |
| Frequent headaches | Workaholism |
| Increased irritability | Exhaustion (physical or emotional) |
| Less ability to feel joy | |

## Impact of Stress on Performance

- Stress will affect work performance
- Stress in the workplace will carry on to your personal life
- Stress-related losses cost organizations billions of dollars annually

**Stress:** the body's reaction to a tense situation

## I used to be a cat…

## part II: signs & symptoms

## Burnout Stage

Have you ever felt like you only have half of yourself at work or at home?

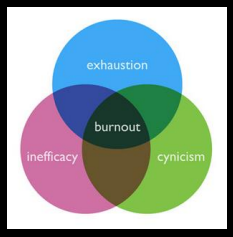
Managing your **time without setting priorities** is like shooting randomly and calling whatever you hit the target.

PETER TURLA

# What is **job burnout?**

A form of extreme stress where you lack motivation and the desire to work

- Tardiness
- Absence
- Complaining
- Lack of quality




# You may be on the **road to burnout if:**

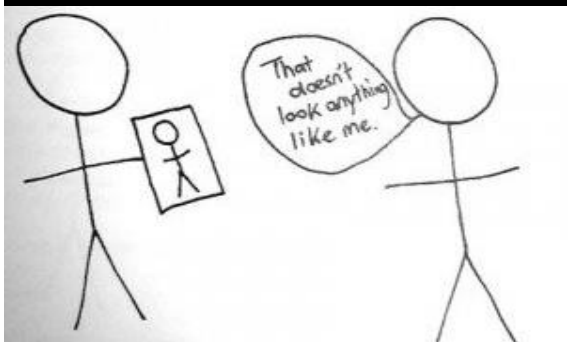
- ✓ Every day is BAD day
- ✓ **Caring about your work or home life seems like a waste of energy**
- ✓ You're exhausted all the time
- ✓ **Majority of your day is spent on tasks you find either mind-numbingly dull or overwhelming**
- ✓ You feel like nothing you do makes a difference or is appreciated

## Glass of Water…

## In a nutshell…

Pick your battles
when it comes to your
**STRESS**

## Illustrate your sources of personal and professional stress




# part III: hands-on assessment

## Self Assessment

**Answer "yes" or "no" to the questions below:**

1.__ Personal concerns commonly intrude on my professional role.
2.__ My colleagues seem to lack understanding.
3.__ I find even small changes enormously draining.
4.__ I can't seem to recover quickly after association with a traumatic event.
5.__ Association with trauma affects me very deeply.
6.__ My clients' stress affects me deeply.
7.__ I have lost my sense of hopefulness.
8.__ I feel vulnerable much of the time.
9.__ I feel overwhelmed by unfinished personal business.

**Answering "yes" to four or more questions might indicate that you are suffering from compassion fatigue. This instrument is for informational purposes to serve as a quick check; it has not been validated.**

## Suffering From Compassion Fatigue? Life Stress?

- Denial is one of the most detrimental symptoms of compassion fatigue and life stress
- It can easily hinder your ability to assess the level of fatigue and stress in your life as well as thwart your efforts to begin the healing process
- The following two tests were designed to help you recognize symptoms of compassion fatigue and life stress in your life
- While they will never replace a qualified medical diagnosis, they may help you determine if you need to seek further assistance

- **Compassion Fatigue Self-Test**
- **Life Stress Self-Test**
- **Helper Pocket Card**

## part IV: factors that contribute to compassion fatigue

## What are the factors of Compassion Fatigue?

## Factors that contribute to Compassion Fatigue

- ✓ Nature of the job
- ✓ Role conflict
- ✓ Negative workplace environment
- ✓ Frustrating work situations
- ✓ Case management workload
- ✓ Not talking about it
- ✓ Exposure to traumatic material
- ✓ Co-worker personality styles
- ✓ Lack of effective support systems
- ✓ Lack of community resources
- ✓ Fear of negative publicity

## Unhealthy ways of coping

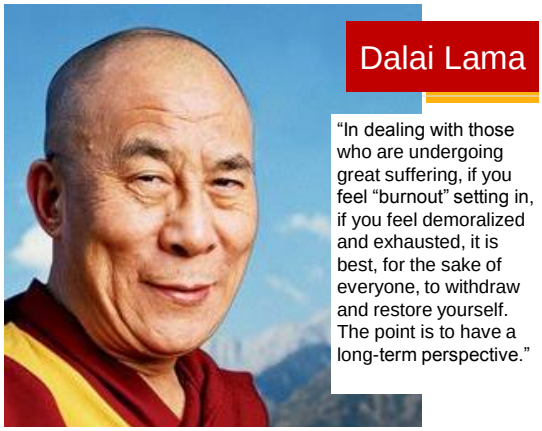
- Acts of frustration towards loved ones
- Use substances to include but not limited to alcohol
- Deny stress
- Minimize issues
- Get depressed
- Get anxious
- Intellectualize

## Consequences of untreated Compassion Fatigue

- Causes people to leave their jobs/careers
- Fall into the agony of addictions
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Suicide/homicide

## part V: discuss coping skills and homework

What are ways you **relieve stress?**




## Out-of-Balance

**Wellness Wheel**

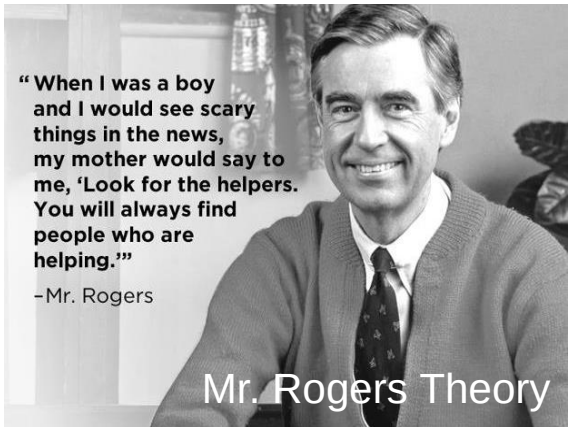
**What is out of balance in your life?**

## In-Balance

**Wellness Wheel**

"If you have no compassion for yourself, then you are not able of **developing compassion** for others."

DALAI LAMA




"My tank is **empty!**"

"Let's **refill it!**"

## Limit Alcohol Intake

**Alcohol raises blood pressure and can harm liver, brain, and heart…**

## Quit Smoking

- Injures blood vessel walls
- Speeds up process of hardening of the arteries
- Once you quit, your risk of having a heart attack is **reduced after one year**

## The Path to Wellness

- **Be kind to yourself**
- Express your needs verbally
- **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
- **Take positive action to change your environment**

# part VI: next steps

- Recharge your batteries daily
- Spend plenty of quiet time alone
- Hold connected and meaningful conversations daily
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Write down your thoughts

## Homework

Be sure to take care of yourself or let someone else take care of you tonight!

**Additional Information & Resources**
@ cabhp.asu.edu

## Questions & Comments

**Thank You!**

https://cabhp.asu.edu

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## References & Resources

**Professional Quality of Life Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatic Stress;**
**http://www.proqol.org**

**Charles Figley**
**http://www.charlesfigley.com**

**Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project**
**http://www.compassionfatigue.org**

## Acknowledgements & Disclaimer

These slides and associated materials were developed by:

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