

Compassion Fatigue & Burnout

What is compassion fatigue

This is a condition characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion, which may lead to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others.

What is burnout

Burnout can stem from an overload of work or responsibilities and can be coupled with a feeling of not accomplishing what you initially expected. Burnout tends to happen over a period of time and is characterized by these stages: a) enthusiasm b) stagnation c) frustration d) apathy

What is secondary stress

Secondary traumatic stress (STS) occurs when someone becomes traumatized by hearing about a traumatic event experienced by someone else.

Some symptoms of compassion fatigue

- Feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, helpless, or powerless when hearing of other's suffering
- Feeling hypersensitive or insensitive when hearing difficult stories
- Limited tolerance for stress
- Self isolation or withdrawal

Prevention

- Education and awareness
 - Learn the signs and symptoms
 - Watch your general stress and anxiety level
 - Seek help when anything becomes concerning
- Healthy boundaries
 - Set mental, emotional and physical limits
 - Know that there are some tasks that you can't take on
 - Learn who to refer tasks to rather than trying to do them yourself
- Support network
 - Always talk to your coordinator when you need assistance, advice, or the opportunity to vent
 - Talk to your family and friends about your volunteering so that they can help you
 - Talk to your mentee's team to share concerns and find resources for things you cannot take on

How to cope

- Practice self care
 - People who practice good self care are less vulnerable to stress and compassion fatigue
 - Self care can look different for everyone but can include things like a good diet and regular exercise, restful sleep, and finding a balance between work (or other commitments) and leisure

- Find time for personal hobbies to help lower stress levels and improve overall satisfaction
- Mindfulness
 - Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations
 - Practice by focus on your breathing
 - Do a body scan meditation and be aware of any sensations, emotions, or thoughts associated with different parts of your body
- Shift perspective
 - This can help reframe how you see a situation
 - Pause and ask yourself questions about a situation in order to help reassign what feelings you understand the other person may feeling and what your role in that situation should be
- Self compassion
 - Compassion fatigue can come from frustration, guilt and shame come from not being able to meet our own standards
 - Learn to have personal acceptance regardless or whether you meet your goals or not
 - You can accept that you are unable to do everything
 - Imaging what advice you would give a friend in your situation and treat yourself the same way

This is a summary from Mindspring's webinar.

You can check out the full video using the link below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/VbCwBH68m94zaN2LsyUY8KiStlotYBkGmSRU8lilIE3Qnm evtD0xCaoRx2iYLFXx.zcD09Vgv4kA4B3AD?startTime=1702403898000>