Compassion Fatigue; Helping the Helper
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Objectives

• Effects of our work as a caregiver
• What is compassion Fatigue
• PTS / Secondary Traumatic Stress / Burn out
• Components of Treatment for Compassion Fatigue
• Skill Building and Resources
Introductions

• Who are we as a group?
Compassion Fatigue Narrative

- 2003 – remarried – continued work as a BHT
- 2007-09 working two jobs / going to school fulltime
- 2010-12 – working with chronic illness / family issues / divorce talk
- 2012-2016 – Working with military trauma / family issues escalate
- 2017 – Current role / family issues again in crisis
Effects of our work

- Who has been effected by their work as a caregiver?
- Silent Witness
What is Compassion Fatigue?

• Two Models

• Compassion Fatigue = Secondary Traumatization + Burnout (Figley, 1995)

• Compassion Fatigue = Secondary Traumatic Stress +/x Burnout +/x Primary Traumatic Stress (Gentry & Baranowsky, 1997)
Secondary Traumatic Stress Vs Primary Traumatic Stress

- **Criterion A: Event** (experiencing) Witnessing or gaining knowledge of event...learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by family member or other close associate (DSM-IV-TR)

- **Criterion B: Re-experiencing / Intrusion**
  Intrusive thoughts of clients, clients imagery, dreams, *increased perceived threat in all contexts.*
Secondary Traumatic Stress / Primary Traumatic Stress Symptoms (Criterion C)

**Arousal**
- Fear / Anxiety
- Obsessive Thoughts
- Sleep Problems
- Irritability / Easily Angered
- Impulsive
- Disease / illness
- Immune problems
- Poor concentration
- Hypervigilance
- Somatization
- Weight gain / loss

- **Increased perceived Threat**

**Avoidance**
- Procrastination
- Depression
- Self Rx
- Relational problems
- Isolation
- Blame / Shame
- Dread
- Hopelessness
- Diminished self care
- Rumination
- Entitlement

- **Chronic Fatigue**
Safety Net (tool) for Compassion Resiliency

- Empower 1-2 people to confront us when we
  - Become Symptomatic
  - Consistently diverge from our normal actions
- Person Should know us well and be able to withstand our attempts at deflection
- Denial increases as we become more symptomatic
Burnout

• Two Definitions

• Burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Goldberg, 1996; Maslach and leiter, 2003)

• The chronic condition of perceived demands outweighing perceived resources (Gentry & Baranowsky, 1996)
autonomic nervous system dysregulation; regulates the body's unconscious actions

Sympathetic Nervous System
• Fight or Flight
  – accelerated the heart rate
  – constrict blood vessels
  – raise blood pressure
  – Functions not critical to survival shut down
  – Arousal / Avoidance

Parasympathetic Nervous System
• Rest and Digest
  – Relax
  – Restores body to state of calm
  – Blood pressure decreases
  – Blood Vessels dilate
  – Heart rate decreases
  – Allowing us to think rationally
The chronic condition of perceived demands outweighing perceived resources (Gentry & Baranowsky, 1996)

PERCEIVED THREAT = FIGHT/FLIGHT = SYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE = CHRONIC ANXIOUS PRESENCE = BURNOUT

EMPATHY + VISUALIZATION OF CLIENTS EXPERIENCES = SNS ACTIVATION + CHRONICITY = SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS > BURNOUT.
Tool for measuring compassion fatigue

• Developed by Beth Stamm in 1998 (5 revisions)
• Professional Quality of Life (Pro-QOL v5)
• Measures 3 subcategories
  – Compassion Satisfaction
  – Secondary Traumatic stress
  – Burnout
Healing and Resiliency Skills

• **Self Regulation** — Ability to shift from sympathetic to parasympathetic dominance while fully engaged in the activities of daily living.

• **Intentionality** — Principle based Vs demand Driven; being true to your personal covenant

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• **Perceptual Maturation / Self-validations** — others reactions and valuation do not determine behavior (integrity > reputation)

• **Connection** — Develop and Utilize Support Network

• **Self-Care** — Aerobic Activity 3x/week (best)
Self Regulation

• The ability to intentionally control the activity of our autonomic nervous system

• When an individual perceives a threat—real or imagined—the sympathetic nervous system is dominate

• Self Regulations is as simples as relaxing one’s muscles while encountering perceived threats that arise throughout each workday.
Intentionality

• Living by our personal code
• Moving from reaction to intentional behavior
• First you need to become aware of our intentions. (mission statement)
• What triggers make you break your code
  – Breach of Ethics / practice guidelines
• With self regulation we can desensitize the power of the triggers reduce reactivity and focus on intentional behavior
Perceptual Maturation / Self-validations
“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptual Maturation - Workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demand Vs Choice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- There are no demands on any of us</td>
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<td>- We are always “at choice”</td>
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<td>- Choose to do all work related tasks, especially the undesirable ones</td>
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<td><strong>Outcome Driven Vs Principle Based</strong></td>
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<td>- Outcomes are beyond our control</td>
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<td>- Aim for outcomes but focus upon present behavior</td>
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<td>- Do your best, it’s always good enough</td>
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<td>- Maintain your integrity</td>
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<td><strong>Relinquishing Entitlement and Secondary Gains</strong></td>
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<td>- We are not victims of our work, we competed to be in our positions</td>
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<td>- Your work entitles you to nothing more than anyone else</td>
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<td>- Become aware of the gains you receive from perceiving yourself as a victim to your work</td>
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<td>- Decide whether these “gains” are worth the cost</td>
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<td>- Embrace your workplace as an opportunity to practice your principles – become better, stronger person</td>
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<td><strong>System Demands</strong></td>
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<td>- Accept that all systems demand more from us than we can give</td>
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<td>- Relinquish your expectation of acknowledgement and appreciation</td>
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<td>- It is not your work causing your stress, it is what is happening in your body as you encounter the situations at work</td>
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<td>Perceptual Maturation / Self Optimization</td>
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<td><strong>Mindfulness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Calm Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Observing mind</td>
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<td>• Acceptance of current situation / non judgmental</td>
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<td>• Curiosity / teachable</td>
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<td>• Remain in the present (no multitasking)</td>
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<td><strong>Science of Happiness</strong></td>
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<td>• Positive emotions can be intentionally achieved</td>
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<td>• More positive = More effective = More resilient</td>
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<td>• Gratitude</td>
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<td>• Service</td>
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<td>• Goodwill</td>
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<td><strong>Self-Validation</strong></td>
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<td>• Many care providers rely upon their work and feedback from their patients supervisors or colleagues as primary source of worth</td>
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<td>• When we need outside validation then all human interactions are perceived threats</td>
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<td>• Overly sensitive to others evaluations of us</td>
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<td><strong>Personal Development</strong></td>
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<td>• Intentionality</td>
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<td>• Coming into alignment with owes own principles</td>
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<td>• Graceful $ elegant instead of “brute force”</td>
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<td>• Working smart instead of hard</td>
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Connection

• Develop a Support Network
  – Four Important Functions
  1. Sharing Trauma Narratives
  2. Empower them to confront
  3. Telling on ourselves
  4. Hold us accountable
Self-Care

“That Which is to give light must endure burning”
(Viktor Frankl)

- Those of us that have chosen to be givers of that light are going to experience some burn
- If we are going to burn than we need to burn fuel and not ourselves

Components of good self-care
1. Regular aerobic activity
2. Healthy Diet
3. Good Sleep Hygiene
4. Regular social activities
5. Creative activity or hobbies
6. Spiritual practices
7. Professional enrichment
Compassion Fatigue Resiliency; Conclusion

• Caregiving hurts
• Impossible to avoid pain associated with professional or volunteer caregiving
• A professional does not have to suffer if s/he is willing to evolve and mature personal and professional skills
• It is possible to be healthy while working in a toxic environment.