Compassion Fatigue

Susan Keever CADC/CAS

Compassion fatigue is caused by empathy. It is the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people.

Compassion Fatigue Burnout Symptoms Cognitive

Lowered concentration, apathy, rigidity, disorientation, minimization, preoccupation with trauma.

Emotional

- Powerlessness, anxiety, guilt, anger, numbness, fear, helplessness, sadness, depression, depleted, shock, blunted or enhanced affect.
- Experiencing troubling dreams similar to a patients dream. Suddenly and involuntarily recalling frightening experience while working with a patient or family.

Behavioral

Irritable, withdrawn, moody, poor sleep, nightmares, appetite change, hypervigilance, isolating.

Spiritual

Questioning life's meaning, pervasive hopelessness, loss of purpose, questioning of religious beliefs, loss of faith/skepticism.

Somatic

Sweating, rapid heartbeat, breathing difficulty, aches and pains, dizziness, impaired immune system, headaches, difficulty falling or staying asleep.

Self Care

Authentic and Sustainable Self Care Begins With You:

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