



Compassion Fatigue

A AWARENESS

Compassion fatigue is a combination of **burnout** (perceived demands outweigh perceived resources, scheduling, etc.) and **secondary traumatic stress** (seeing people suffer, or hearing stories about suffering).

Be aware of the symptoms:

- Diminished sense of well-being
- Mentally and physical tired
- Sleep disturbance
- Bad dreams & intrusive thoughts
- Loss of ability to regulate emotions
- Compulsive behaviors (overeating, gambling)
- Chronic physical ailments
- Using substances to mask feelings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Depressed feelings
- In denial about problems
- Excessive complaints about administrative functions
- Isolation and loss of morale

B BALANCE

Self Regulation

Stress-relief exercises, aerobics, good self-care.

Grounding/Centering

Body sway, 54321 technique.

Nurture Yourself

Put activities in your schedule that are sources of pleasure, joy, and diversion.

Mini-Escapes

Take 60 seconds and think of all the things you can do in 90 seconds to recharge.

Mindfulness

Engage in meditations, prayers, deep breathing, etc.

Intentionality

The art of finding purpose and meaning in life/work. Find meaning in your work.

Journaling

Think about your day and choose to, at a minimum, respond to a few questions to process and reflect: What am I grateful for today? What value did I focus on today? Did I learn today?

C CONNECTIONS

Don't isolate

Talk to a coworker, therapist, clergy, friend, family, supervisor, etc.

Build a positive support system

Research shows that connecting to someone who does what you do relieves stress.

Pets

They are invulnerable to "provider burnout."

CPR: Connect, Process, and Relax

Find someone you trust and ask them to be your burnout buddy:

"Hey pal, I may be at risk for compassion fatigue. I wonder if you would be willing to talk with me from time to time so I can process some things. I will always make sure it is a good time for you. I will keep our visits to 20-30 minutes. I expect us both to speak with respect. I expect you to keep our talks strictly confidential. I am willing to do the same for you when you need to talk."

Contact

801.442.3509 or 800.832.7733 | EAP@imail.org

Free confidential counseling services and 24/7 crisis hotline.



Intermountain®
Employee Assistance Program

THE PHASES OF COMPASSION FATIGUE:



The Zealot Phase

We are committed, involved, and available. We willingly put in extra hours. We volunteer. We are willing to go the extra mile and do that without prompting.



The Irritability Phase

We begin to cut corners. We begin to avoid patient contact. We begin to mock our colleagues and patients. We daydream or become distracted when patients are speaking.



The Withdrawal Phase

Our enthusiasm turns sour. Our patients become a blur and run together. Problems in our personal life begin to surface. We are tired all the time and no longer wish to talk about work.



The Zombie Phase

Our hopelessness turns to rage. We begin to hate people (any and all people). We even hate our coworkers if they dare question us. Others become incompetent or ignorant in our eyes. We develop a disdain for our patients.



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