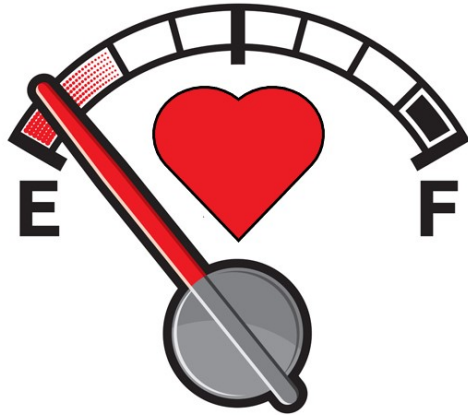




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Compassion Fatigue and the Behavioral Health Workforce



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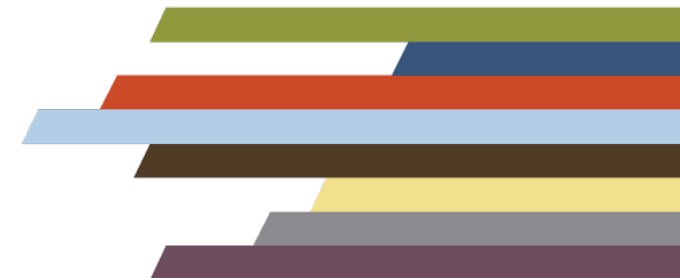
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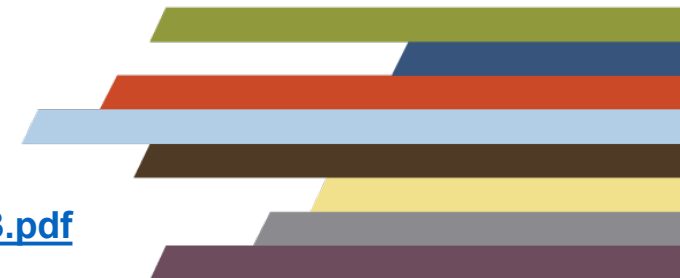
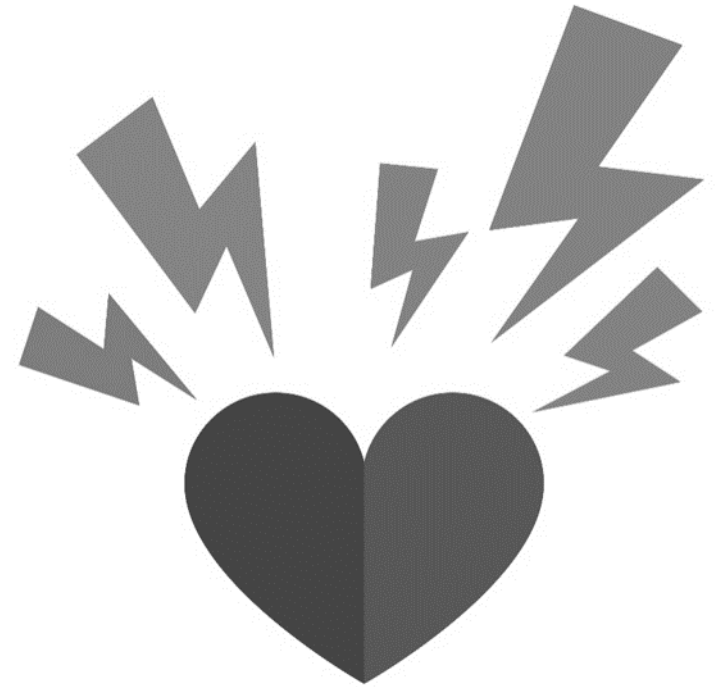
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Just Part of the Job...

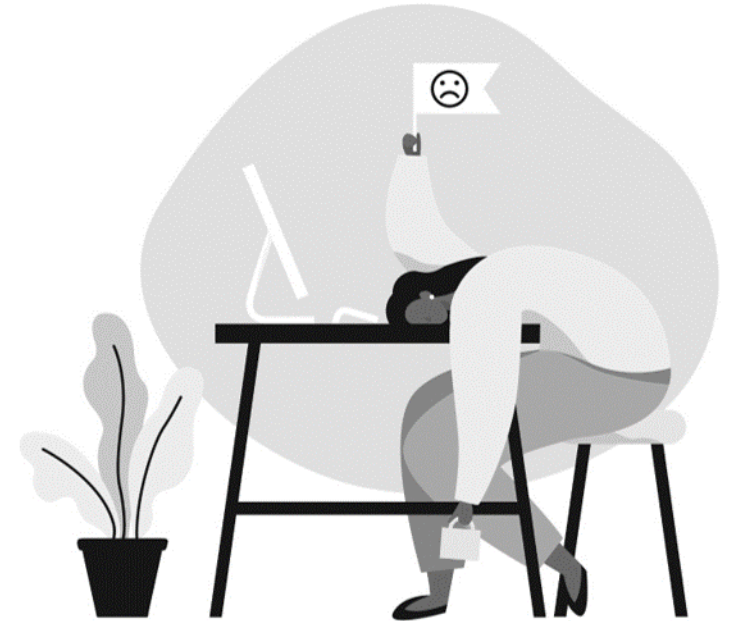
- **‘To work with those who are vulnerable and suffering, particularly trauma populations, inherently requires clinicians to be actively ready to use their own personal psychological resources in the form of empathy and compassion on a daily basis.**
- **While this may seem obvious to those of us in the profession, we maintain that this “requirement of the job” is quite unique in comparison to other professional disciplines**
- **In other words, the emotional requirements of clinical practice, specifically the chronic use of empathy and compassion, are simply not required as part of the essential skill set in other professions.’**

The most insidious aspect of compassion fatigue is that it attacks the very core of what brings helpers into this work: their empathy and compassion for others.



Burnout has three distinct domains:

- emotional exhaustion
- depersonalization
- reduced sense of personal accomplishment

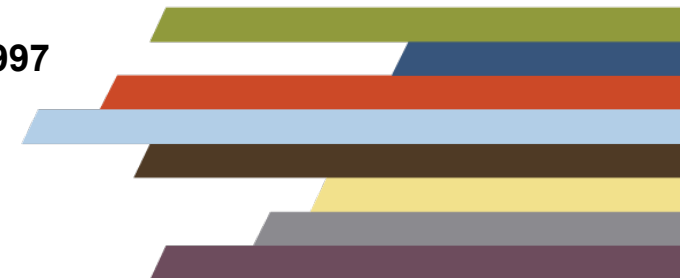


Maslach, 1982, 2001; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 1997



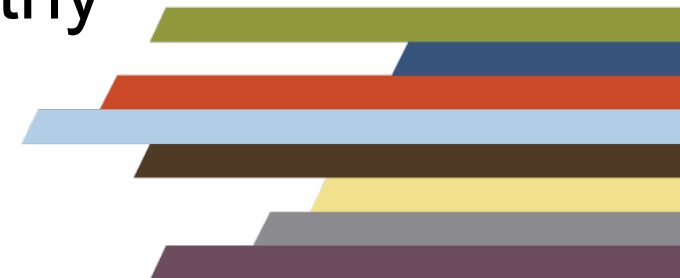
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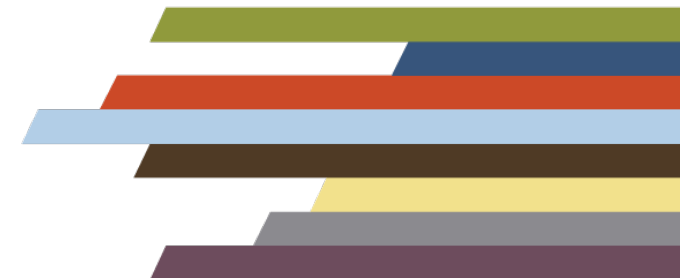
Compassion Satisfaction...

- A recent shift has occurred to focus on the positive aspects and experiences that occur in trauma and/or behavioral practice RATHER than just focusing on the negative aspects
- Compassion Satisfaction is about the pleasure a helper can experience from being able to help others and to make a positive difference in the world.
- A review of the literature revealed one common denominator for compassion fatigue- use of empathy and compassion as the driving factor that brought satisfaction



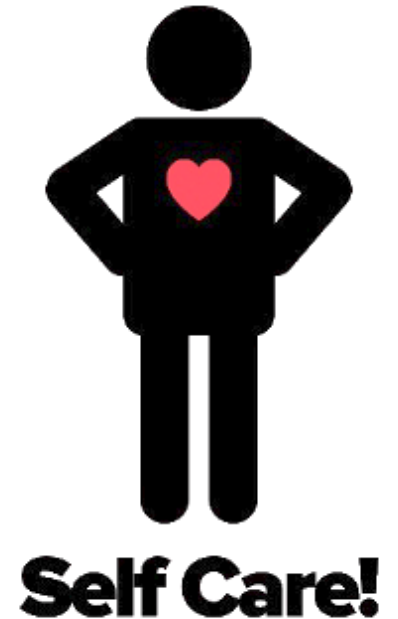
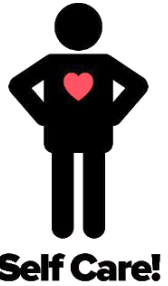
Compassion Satisfaction

- Comes from providing compassionate care which requires **Kindness**, **Empathy**, and **Sensitivity**
- There is also a moral element, whereby choosing not to show compassion may compound the pain or distress experienced by another person Gilbert, 2013
- Research findings suggest that helping professionals can gain considerable satisfaction from connecting with and supporting service users Senreich et al., 2018
- ‘Compassion satisfaction’ is commonly identified as one of the most rewarding and motivating aspects of helping work that can also enhance feelings of personal accomplishment and fulfilment Stamm, 2005; Cosley et al., 2010
- Satisfaction with providing compassionate care can also offer protection against stress and burnout, an acknowledged risk factor for health and social care professionals, and help build emotional resilience Kinman & Grant, 2016



Self- Care Plans

- Self-care behaviors that are part of a plan may be more sustainable
- Development of a self-care plan is important and needs to include active coping strategies:
 - physical health (exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep)
 - emotional well-being (creative endeavors such as art or cooking, spiritual activities such as meditation or church)
 - seeking the social support of family and friends)
- Are likely to provide the greatest benefit (see Newell & MacNeil, 2010)
- 3 coping strategies found to have helped social workers manage compassion fatigue:
 - Have a clear self-care plan
 - Participate in activities or hobbies that restore energy
 - Have a work-to-home transition plan that is part of the plan



When talking about self-care as an ethical issue, let's review these important terms -



Compassion Fatigue & Compassion Satisfaction

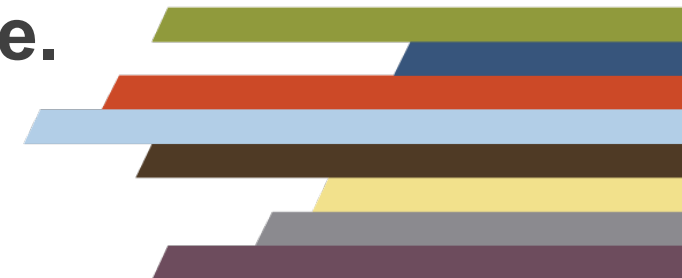
- **Compassion Fatigue** is the emotional and physical fatigue experienced by professionals due to their chronic use of empathy in helping others in distress.

Figley, 1995; Newell et al., 2016; Stamm, 2010; Turgoose & Maddox, 2017

- **Compassion Satisfaction** refers to those aspects of work that are rewarding and fulfilling to the human service professional.

Conrad & Keller-Guenther, 2006; Stamm, 2005

Providing **help, kindness, empathy,** and **support** can lead to compassion fatigue unless self-care plans, self compassion, and self-awareness activities are put in place.



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