Compassion fatigue is a term used to describe the toll that exposure to others' trauma takes on an individual, often seen as a "cost of caring." It typically emerges due to both direct exposure to distressing events and indirect exposure through others' emotional and physical suffering. This fatigue affects individuals who become overwhelmed by repeated exposure to trauma, leaving them unable to replenish their emotional resources for their own well-being. This depletion can significantly impact various aspects of their lives.

**A green sign with white outline of a person running

Description automatically generatedHow can compassion fatigue affect us?**

**What can we do to reduce compassion fatigue?**

Compassion fatigue can affect individuals by manifesting symptoms affecting both their personal and professional capacities. These symptoms might not always be readily apparent, which highlights the importance of being mindful of regularly assessing personal limits.

**Reducing compassion fatigue requires implementing strategies that prioritize emotional well-being:**

* **Be Self-Aware: being aware and cautious of signs of compassion fatigue in yourself, such as increased irritability, lack of concentration and emotional exhaustion can be the first step in addressing compassion fatigue.**
* **Set Boundaries: It is important to have clear boundaries between work and personal life. Reduce exposure to distressing events outside of work such as the news and prioritize relaxation.**
* **Seek Support: Ensure to reach out for supports professionally and personally. Having an open conversation about your emotions and experiences can help with reduction.**
* **Limit Exposure: If you are continually involved with distressing content, be mindful of breaking up your exposure. Take breaks or rotate your workload to avoid overexposure.**
* **Professional Development: Attend any offered training that focuses on stress management, coping strategies, and/or trauma related education to help you build your toolbox to reduce compassion fatigue.**

People grappling with compassion fatigue might struggle with concentration and decision-making, have a reduced tolerance for stress, become more irritable, and experience feelings of discouragement and hopelessness, among other symptoms. These individuals might display behaviors that are uncharacteristic due to feeling overwhelmed and fatigued by the demands of their job and life.

Consequently, compassion fatigue induces a state of extreme exhaustion stemming from factors such as inadequate sleep, prolonged mental and physical exertion, and increased stress levels. This state can potentially result in feelings of isolation and a tendency to withdraw from social interactions.



**Is compassion fatigue a workplace issue?**

Compassion fatigue is a workplace issue that is not exclusive to health care providers, it can manifest in any individual where a level of exposure to suffering exists regardless of industry. Recognizing the widespread nature of compassion fatigue is crucial, as it influences not only the physical but also the cognitive and emotional well-being of individuals. The repercussions can be significant, potentially giving rise to serious issues and substantially impacting overall employee wellness.

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| * Trauma Exposure | * Workload and Demands |
| * Availability of Resources and Supports | * Role Expectations |
| * Scheduling/Workday Structure | * Training and Education |
| * Organizational Culture/Boundaries |  |

Workplace factors that may influence compassion fatigue are:

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| **MEETING DESCRIPTION** | | | |
| **Meeting Date:** |  | **Time:** |  |
| **Location:** |  | **Supervisor:** |  |
| **Number in Crew:** |  | **Number Attended:** |  |
| **Attended By:** |  |  | **Absent** |
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| **REVIEW ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING** | **INCIDENTS/INJURIES REVIEWED** |
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| **TOPICS DISCUSSED** |
| 1. **Psychological Health & Safety: Compassion Fatigue** |
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| **WORKERS CONCERNS** |
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| **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN** |
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| **MEETING CONDUCTED BY** | | | |
| **Supervisor:** |  | **Manager:** |  |
| **Date:** |  | **Date:** |  |