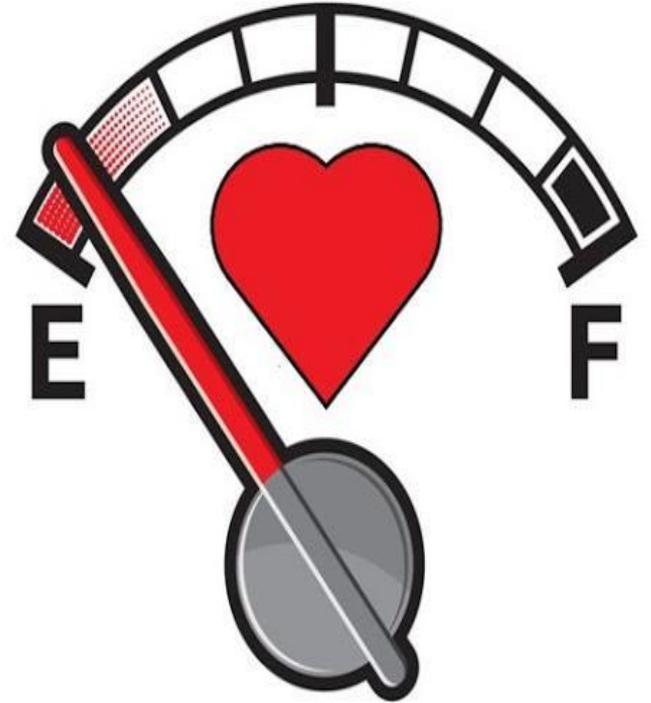


Compassion Fatigue

Research Project by: Samar Alruhaimi

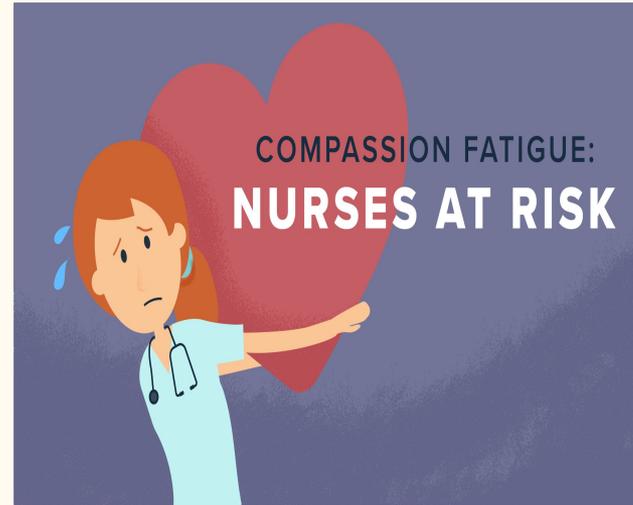
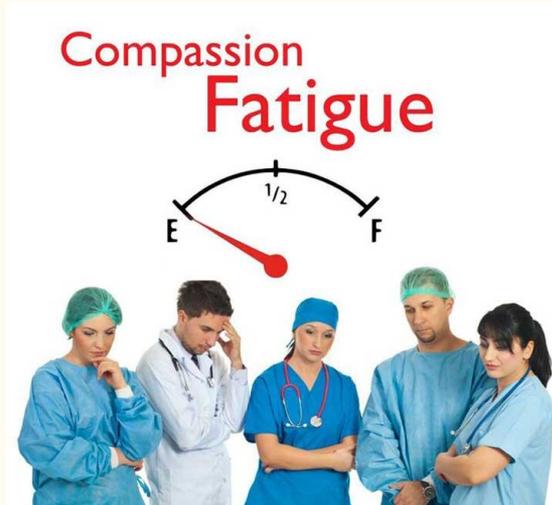
What Is Compassion Fatigue?

- A condition caused by emotional and physical exhaustion, which impacts one's ability to empathize or feel compassion for others (Figley, 1995)
- Described as the negative cost of caring, or secondary traumatic stress (Figley, 1995)
- NOT trauma-related
- Occurs when caregivers or professionals begin to feel the pain and suffering of the people for whom they care for



Who is Susceptible to Compassion Fatigue?

- a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress, which creates "secondary traumatic stress for the helper" (Figley, 1995)
- Healthcare workers are highly susceptible to compassion fatigue



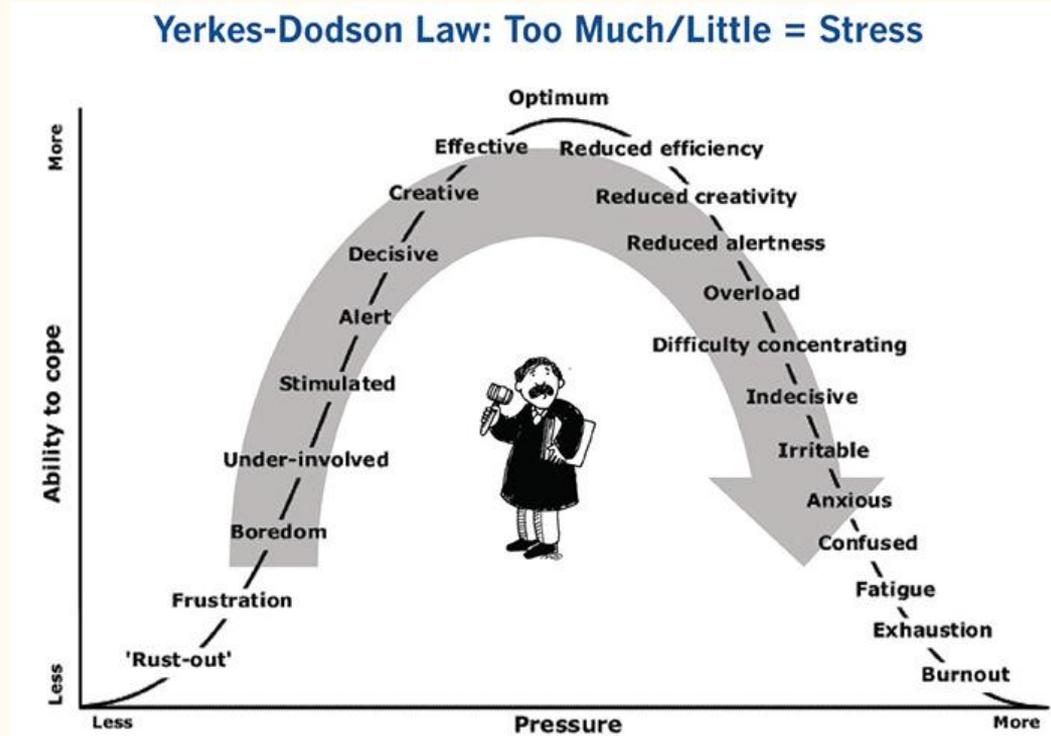
What are the Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue?



Developed by Christina Clarke, MS, HS-BCP, Coordinator of Continuing Medical Education and faculty, Wake Forest School of Medicine, Northwest AHEC

How are Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Different?

- Compassion fatigue has similar symptoms to burnout
- Compassion fatigue is a preoccupation with absorbing trauma and emotional stresses of others, creating secondary traumatic stress within the helper
- Burnout is about being 'worn out' and can affect any profession



Compassion Fatigue Impact On Work

- According to an article from *Nurse Leader Insider*, "compassion fatigue can lead to an increase in medical errors due to a lack of communication or inability to react" (2017).
- "Nurses suffering compassion fatigue can become unsympathetic, self-centered, and preoccupied, to the detriment of a patient's care" (*Nurse Leader Insider*, 2017).
- Some workers in the healthfield don't cope with it well nor get the help they need, putting their mental health significantly at risk
- Many patients don't realize how tough it is for their caretakers

What Does Compassion Fatigue Feel Like?

Start @ 11:25

Ends @ 12:40



Nurses and Compassion Fatigue

- According to a study by Lombardo and Eyre, “it is important for nurses to become knowledgeable about compassion fatigue symptoms and intervention strategies and to develop a personal plan of care so as to and achieve a healthy work-life balance” (2011).
- Additionally, “healthcare systems [must] invest in creating healthy work environments that prevent compassion fatigue and address the needs of nurses who are experiencing compassion fatigue” (Lombardo and Eyre, 2011).

Case Study from Proactive RN (Digwood, 2019)

Nurse #2 was a nurse who exhibited anxiety and job dissatisfaction on a regular basis. She was often overwhelmed with her complex, patient-care assignments and expressed much sadness about her patients' social and emotional problems. She was frequently tearful and verbally acknowledged not wanting to come to work. In addition she was sensitive to feedback and felt a lack of support from some of her peers and supervisors. She had difficulty sleeping, worried about work on her days off, and talked openly about wanting to leave the hospital.

Nurse #2 talked often with several clinical nurse specialists who helped her focus on achieving a healthy work-life balance. They counseled her on positive self-care strategies and effective communication techniques and guided her in considering long-term career plans. Although attempts were made to help improve the situation on her unit, she continued to experience anxiety and dissatisfaction.

Despite her growing unhappiness, she identified a specific area of nursing in which she had always wanted to work. Arrangements were made for her to talk with the supervisor and schedule a shadowing experience in this area. She decided to transfer to this new area and has since made a positive adjustment. Being proactive in meeting her own needs and addressing work-related needs has resulted in Nurse #2 feeling more energized about her work assignment and more eager to come to work.

<https://www.elitecme.com/resource-center/nursing/compassion-fatigue/>

The Cost of Compassion Fatigue, according to Lombardo and Eyre (2011)

“There are 3.1 million registered nurses in the US; they comprise the largest group of healthcare workers in the country (Health Resources and Services Administration, 2010). A nursing occupational hazard of providing empathic, relationship-based care to patients and families is the development of compassion fatigue. The impact of compassion fatigue on nurses can be profound. It may cause stress-related symptoms and job dissatisfaction among caregivers and decreased productivity and job turnover within the healthcare system (Medical News Today, 2010). In today’s economy compassion fatigue can be very costly personally and professionally for nurses and financially for institutions.”

" This unique study could lead to care environments encouraging the self-compassion and well-being of their acute medical care nursing staff and become places where threat cultures, weak leadership, an emphasis on task rather than process and a feeling of being undervalued, do not monopolise." (Francis, R., 1970)

Different Nurses in different field will experience different experiences with compassion fatigue but most will encounter it and suffer from it deeply if they don't get help and think their schedule is too busy. That just the sad truth.

Be kind to your vets and your healthcare workers, please!

Be considerate - it's a tough job!!!



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