Compassion Fatigue

Tools for Building Resilience In A Stressful World
Compassion Fatigue

- Welcome
- Definition
- Prevalence
- Symptoms
- Economic Stressors
- Tools for Reconnecting: A Personal Wellness Plan
- Resources
- References
Introducing Your Presenters

• Pam Gionfriddo, MPAFF
  Chief Executive Officer
  Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County, Inc.

• Susan Carabello, LMHC
  Psychotherapist
  Oakwood Center of the Palm Beaches, Inc.

• Kristin McCabe, LPC, RYT
  Therapist, Coping with Economic Stress Program
  Oakwood Center of the Palm Beaches

Compassion Fatigue: Tools for Building Resilience in a Stressful World

Audio: Use your microphone and speakers (VoIP) or call in using your telephone.
773-945-1010, access code 424-913-594, audio key [audio key]
**Definition**

- **Compassion Fatigue**: user friendly term for Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder - “emotional virus”

- The natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other – the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person

- It is distinct from PTSD where the exposure is directly experienced by the sufferer or Burnout which is exhaustion of emotional strength due to stress.
Alert:
Emotional Virus Sweeps
America’s Workplace
Prevalence

- 80% of first responders and crisis workers are affected
- 60% - 70% of mental health and medical professionals
- Rates are increasing for all professions as economic stressors increase.
Symptoms

- Intrusive: thoughts, feelings or sensations that continue to repeat themselves in the present. Includes flashbacks, nightmares, entitlement.
• Avoidance: silencing responses, isolation, loss of energy and joy, acting out. Treating clients in ways that breach our integrity.
• Arousal: anxious, not sleeping well, increased perception of demand and threat, self-soothing, angry/impulsive behaviors increase.
The Effect of Economic Stress on Mental and Public Health Professionals

- Funding for many programs has been reduced or eliminated.

- Resulting in fewer new hires, reductions in salaries, lower or no new salary increases.

- Healthcare professionals stretched thin and overworked.

- Not only are healthcare professionals stressed, their clients may be increasingly stressed, and there are more clients needing assistance.
Economic Stressors

• Recognize the unprecedented client need coupled with reduced resources.
  
  • Set healthy boundaries for yourself and your time.
  • Have strategic team meetings to prioritize work loads and level - set expectations.
  • Recognize and support yourself for what you have accomplished rather than what is left undone.
  • Remember to care for yourself first, setting a healthy example for work associates and clients!
Coping with Economic Stress Program

- Coping with Economic Stress is a new project developed by Oakwood Center of the Palm Beaches, Inc., funded through a generous grant provided by Palm Healthcare Foundation.

- Program includes:
  - Series of 5 workshops in which the participants will engage in activities including group discussions, education, and role play designed to identify stressors, increase resilience, improve coping skills, improve family communications and strengthen ties to the community.
  - Individual and family therapy also offered free of charge.
Tools for Reconnecting: A Personal Wellness Plan

Yeah, sure it was hard on you, but fuh-get about it...

Dr. Milano's trendy "fuh-get about it" therapy.
WRAP:
Wellness Recovery Action Plan

• Each plan is unique, designed by you for YOU
  • Wellness Toolbox
    • Exercise
    • Going to the movies, reading
    • Cooking
    • Planning a vacation
    • Music lessons
    • Playing computer games
    • Utilizing self-help groups
    • Engaging in your favorite hobby
    • Take action where you can
  • Daily Maintenance Plan
  • Identifying Triggers and Action Plan
  • Crisis Planning
Build emotional resilience

• Begins with acceptance that the way I work needs to change
• Resolve any primary trauma with CBT or EMDR
• Increase self-efficacy and self-monitoring skills
• Nurture caring and supportive relationships both within and outside the family
• Place your well being at the top of your priority list
Switching On and Off

- Resilient workers turn their feelings off when they go on duty.
- This is not denial, it is a coping strategy.
- It provides protection while working and support when resting.
  - Conscious process
  - Images
  - Rituals
  - Breathe
Adjunct Therapies

- Guided imagery
- Acupuncture
- Yoga
- Meditation/Prayer
- Energy work
- Massage
- Breathwork
- Reflexology

- Meridian Tapping Techniques
- Tai Chi
- Qigong
- Reiki
- Healing Touch
- Affirmations
- Music Therapy/Dance
HeartMath Institute
A Resource for Reducing Stress in the Work Place

• HeartMath: a training and consulting organization founded by Doc Childre, a pioneer in stress management and self-esteem research.

• Differences between “true care” and “overcare”

• Higher and lower frequency bands: thoughts are powerful

• Experiential exercises to practice at home and in the workplace:
  – Heart Lock-In Technique
  – Freeze-Frame
  – Appreciation
  – Sending compassion
Resources for Reducing Compassion Fatigue

- Understanding Compassion Fatigue – International Traumatology Institute - www.compassionunlimited.com

- Green Cross Academy of Traumatology - provides trained, qualified field traumatologists directly to areas suffering from trauma and compassion fatigue. www.greencross.org

- Figley Institute – Charles Figley – www.figleyinstitute.com

- Resources for PTSD and Compassion Fatigue - www.giftfromwithin.org
• Building Resilience for Hard Times – http://anitaborg.org

• Building Resilience in a Turbulent World –
  www.vision.org

• Wellness Recovery Action Plan – www.mentalhealthrecovery.com

• Stamm, Beth Hudnall, Ph.D., www.proQOL.org

• The Resilience Institute – www.resilience.com

• The Happiness Institute – www.happinessinstitute.com

More Resources

All of the resources in this presentation are available on

www.mhapbc.org
• **Veteran Assistance**
  – Financial emergency assistance for service members, veterans and families who face financial hardship related to deployment and service. [www.miamiredcross.org](http://www.miamiredcross.org)
  – Financial emergency assistance for National Guard members impacted by deployment and service, contact roger.j.williams@fl.nab.army.mil.
  – Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach: Armed Services Advocacy Project provides free legal advice regarding disability benefits, foreclosure prevention, and family law matters.

• **Workforce Alliance**
  – Resume Writing, Interviewing and Computer Training Workshops, and Job Fairs.

• **Urban League: 561-833-1461 x3002**
  – Foreclosure Counseling
  – Economic Empowerment Programs

• **Parent Child Center: 561-841-3500**
  – Housing Partnership: Credit Rebuilding Service, Home Buyer Education
References

References

• Gentry, E.J., (2009), *Understanding Compassion Fatigue.*
• Stamm, Beth Hudnall, Ph.D., www.proQOL.org