

Coping With Compassion Fatigue

The original definition of **Compassion Fatigue** came from the healthcare industry — “the physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those who care for sick or traumatized people over an extended period of time.” The definition more recently expanded to “apathy or indifference toward the suffering of others, as the result of overexposure to tragic news stories and images and the subsequent appeals for assistance.”

COMPASSION FATIGUE?



Not only do professional caregivers deal with this, but more recently are reporting this due to the overlapping challenges of pandemic fatigue, burnout, stress, and the variety of newsworthy events (COVID plus Ukraine plus School Shootings plus political insanity plus....). It gets to the point where many usually caring people start feeling indifferent — unable to take on the emotional burden of a patient’s agony, unable to watch the news one more minute, unable to donate or give on behalf of those suffering, and unable to be empathetic or concerned about family members, coworkers, or their own self-care.

Compassion Fatigue sneaks up on people and is often called “burnout,” but that is a separate issue entirely. Burnout comes from poorly managed stress, while Compassion Fatigue is more specific to our reactions to the overwhelming challenges on the outside.

16 tips on Coping with Compassion Fatigue:

1. **Pay attention to changes in your mood.**
2. **Prioritize yourself.**
3. **Get enough sleep.**
4. **Eat a healthy diet.**
5. **Exercise often.**
6. **Drink plenty of water.**
7. **Set boundaries.**
8. **Take time for self-care and pamper yourself.**
9. **Take breaks from caregiving.**
10. **Find a caregiver support group.**
11. **Find a fun hobby.**
12. **Practice meditation.**
13. **Manage your thoughts.**
14. **Take time off work.**
15. **Ensure you have an identity outside work.**
16. **Have someone you can talk to.**

And, if you don’t have someone safe to talk to, remember that you and your family members are eligible to see, at no cost to you, a professional counselor through your EAP.

Call us at (808) 597-8222 to schedule a time to meet with a counselor near you. All services are strictly confidential.

Employee Assistance of the Pacific

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