Compassion Fatigue Handout

Definitions

Compassion fatigue - compassion fatigue is the natural emotional and physical response to discussing someone else’s trauma. Thus, compassion fatigue can come from daily work, especially if it relates to trauma (Figley, 1995).

Burnout - a long-term stress reaction of helping professionals who work with people that is usually attributed to organizational work-related factors (Noushadd, 2008; Stamm, 2010).

Secondary traumatic stress - the physical and emotional stress of knowing about another’s trauma (Figley, 1999). The signs of secondary traumatic stress are often considered to be somewhat similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with avoidance, arousal and intrusion symptoms (Figley, 1999).

Vicarious trauma - covert cognitive changes as a result of hearing about another’s trauma (Dane & Chachkes, 2003).

Compassion satisfaction - the enjoyment that comes from being a helping professional and helping people. It is often defined as a positive aspect of helping, and like compassion fatigue, can be related to helping people in the system, positive relationships, work with colleagues and positive beliefs about the self.

Professional Quality of Life - the combined feelings of helping are known as professional quality of life, and are a balance of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction (ProQOL.org; Stamm, 2010). In general, the more compassion satisfaction a person has, the less compassion fatigue they have, and vice versa.

Self-Compassion - having compassion for yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don’t like about yourself in the same way you would have compassion for others (Neff, 2009).

Mindfulness - concentrated awareness of one's thoughts, actions or motivations (Think Mindfully, 2012).

Website Resources

Self-Compassion exercises on Dr. Kristin Neff’s website http://www.self-compassion.org/self-compassion-exercises.html

Self-Compassion meditation on Dr. Kristin Neff’s website http://www.self-compassion.org/guided-self-compassion-meditations-mp3.html

List of other self-compassion website resources http://www.self-compassion.org/links-to-other-websites.html

UNR Counseling Center Virtual Relaxation room http://www.unr.edu/counseling/virtual-relaxation-room

Mindfulness Website http://www.thinkmindfully.com

Mindfulness Website - leaf on the stream exercise http://thinkmindfully.com/try-it

Provider Resilience Phone App http://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/provider-resilience/id559980696?mt=8

References


