

Caring Safely

Module 11-1

Creating Content: The Foundations of Compassion Fatigue

In This Module

- Your goal as a Compassion Fatigue Expert
- Your Compassion Fatigue History Graph
- Teaching the foundations of Compassion Fatigue
 - The Concepts
 - The Trajectory
- Your Compassion Fatigue Story

What is Your Goal as a Compassion Fatigue Expert?

- Build awareness about Compassion Fatigue (CF)
- Reduce the stigma surrounding Compassion Fatigue
- Teach people a framework for how to assess their own levels and how to recover/prevent severe symptoms of compassion fatigue
- Teach about compassion fatigue within your organization or within your community

Educate people from a **Stages of Change Perspective** or from an **ADKAR perspective**.

Your Compassion Fatigue History Graph

As an expert in compassion fatigue, you will have many chances to share your own personal experiences. You can share whatever amount of information you are comfortable with. We will review this concept shortly.

Before you get into what you want to share, it can be helpful to have integrated your experience of compassion fatigue into your overall narrative. Your overall life story. How you've experienced compassion fatigue, the intensity of symptoms along with other life events.

Your Compassion Fatigue History Graph

Begin at time with first professional exposure to trauma/pain/suffering as a professional. You may choose to share more about your personal experiences or your personal history, but for the purpose of this practice, please begin at your first professional experience.

Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Timeline

Positive/Helpful Life, Education, Career Events	Date	Adverse/Difficult Life, Education, Career Events	Phase
	2001	Legal Assistant – Exposure to graphic details of trauma. Victim’s Bill of Rights – Desire to become a victim service worker.	High sxs of vicarious trauma.
Started BSW – Excited about helping women and children who had experienced violence	2003	Transcription work – criminal and family court – graphic details of trauma.	Zealot with sxs of VT
First internship at Women’s Shelter – excited as this was exactly what I wanted	2005	Job at women’s shelter – shift work, while full time school. Ongoing trauma exposure, no trauma training, minimal supervision. Regular exposure to graphic details of trauma. No awareness of compassion fatigue or vicarious trauma. High stress in personal life – workload/finances/relationships.	Zealot to Zombie over 2 years.
Graduation BSW and acceptance into advanced standing MSW.	2007	Cross country move. Didn’t know anyone. Away from all family/friends. Grief.	Irritability to Burnout over 4 months.
Great clinical supervisor. Focused on CBT. Learned a lot about trauma work and gained much experience/confidence.		Grad school, heavy schedule, 8-month internship Roommate conflict – no sleep, high stress, increase in anxiety. Very high GAD and developed Panic Disorder	

Your Compassion Fatigue History Graph

Your history graph allows you to see how compassion fatigue has been integrated into your life and your life story.

Even though we know that ACEs impact a helpers experience and that many people have taken on personal caregiving roles prior to professional ones, I don’t begin there as each trainer needs to determine what personal information they want to share and it’s important that if sharing personal information that it’s from a place of teaching and not part of personal recovery.

The Foundations of Compassion Fatigue

- **The main concepts:**
 - Compassion Fatigue, Compassion Satisfaction, Vicarious Trauma, Vicarious Posttraumatic Growth, Burnout, Empathy, Conscious Empathy, Unconscious Empathy, Sustainable Caring
- **A framework for understanding compassion fatigue:**
 - The ProQOL
 - The Compassion Fatigue Trajectory

Ways to Teach the Foundations

- Definitions
- Examples
- Stories

“Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me a truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever” Native American Proverb

Ways to Teach the Foundations

Using story to teach concepts and trajectory

Caring Safely Free Webinar – Focused on my story and examples.
Video of recorded webinar included at bottom of page.

Organize Your Content Foundations of CF

Take your definitions from Module 10 and add your own story (from your CF history graph) or examples from peers (research, books).

Use the downloadable chart to draft (point form) your examples/story points next to the definitions.

You'll see I added the Professional Quality of Life Scale to the chart.

Create Your Content Your CF Story

Write your compassion fatigue story. Not point form. Write it out as if you are explaining it to someone who has never heard of the concepts and who knows nothing about you.

Begin with your first role as a professional helper (likely in school) and write your experiences of compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout and your progression from the phases of the trajectory from first role to current time.

Even though you'll have had years of experiencing compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma without knowing what it was, you can reflect back on it and use those terms. Share that you didn't know what the concepts were or what phase on the trajectory you were in.

Create Your Content Your CF Story Con't

Share when you first heard of the concepts and how you reacted when you learned about compassion fatigue and that it was manageable and your pursuit as a compassion fatigue expert.

I use this framework in my free compassion fatigue webinars – a replay is included under this video if you want to watch it again.

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