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Trauma Informed Compassion Fatigue Resiliency

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Tech Tips

- Keep your link handy (from the email)
- Refresh page or close and use link to get back in
- Close other programs/browsers/pages
- Internet connection –limit other streaming/downloads
- Chrome Browser is recommended
- If I disappear, don't leave, I will be back😊
- References on slides

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Presenter

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Audience

What field are you in?

How long have you been in a helping profession?

Have you taken a training on compassion fatigue before?

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4

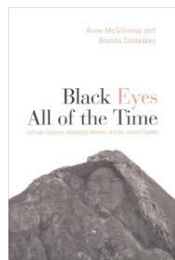
Workshop Agenda

- The difference between Compassion Fatigue, Vicarious Trauma and Burnout
- The Compassion Fatigue trajectory (how it begins)
- What a trauma-informed approach to compassion fatigue looks like
- Signs of compassion fatigue and risk factors
- Three strategies to protect yourself
- What Caring Safely leads to sustainable caring
- **Workshop Bonus Resource at end!**

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5

Black Eyes All of the Time (1999)



Summary: *The impetus for this book arose out of a 1995 Winnipeg study involving twenty-six Aboriginal women. The compelling accounts these women give of the domestic violence they experienced, first as children and later as wives and mothers, make it all too clear that any plan to implement diversionary reforms must first take into account this under-represented group. For survivors of domestic violence, jail terms for abusers allow time for healing, and the threat of criminal prosecution may quell violent outbreaks. Lax responses from an inconsistent criminal justice system often put Native women at risk.*

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6

What is Compassion?

"Compassion is defined as the emotional response when perceiving suffering and involves an authentic desire to help" (Seppala, 2013)

"Compassion...involves the recognition and clear seeing of suffering. It also involves feelings of kindness for people who are suffering, so that desire to help – to ameliorate suffering – emerges." (Neff, 2011)

Two components: identifying with human suffering and a desire or motivation to do something to relieve this suffering.

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7

Immersed in Trauma

WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE:

- 24 hour Crisis Line
- 30 Days Emergency Shelter
- 6 Month Transition Program
- Follow Up Program

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8

Personal Risk Factors

- No awareness of compassion fatigue or how it develops – "burnout"
- Over exposure to trauma or pain/suffering
- Early in career
- Lack of adequate training/supervision
- Lack of organizational recognition/protective policies
- Lack of community resources to support people we are helping
- Lack of self-regulation skills
- Personal histories (Adverse Childhood Experiences/Trauma)

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9

The Zealot Phase

- Committed, involved, available
- Ready to problem solve and make a difference
- Willing to put in extra hours
- Tons of enthusiasm and volunteering
- Willing to go the extra mile "I'll do that"

(Baranovsky and Gentry, 2012)

What did you do during the zealot phase?

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10

Compassion Satisfaction

CS is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well.

For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work.

You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society.

(Probst, 2018)

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11

Peer descriptions Compassion Satisfaction

I really like having people get better. It is really wonderful helping people

I did make a difference, I did make it better. I'm in the right profession. I should be here.

The rewards outweigh the challenges by far

There is no other feeling that can compare to really helping someone who is struggling

(Austin, W. et al., 2012)

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12

Rewards of Compassion

Compassion leads to connection, which correlates to:

- Better mental and physical health
- Speeds up recovery of disease
- May lengthen our lifespan
- Strengthens our immune system
- Improves self-esteem
- Lowers anxiety and depression
- Increases empathy, trust and cooperation with others = more connection!

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13

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Fatigue:

- Deep physical and emotional exhaustion
- A pronounced change in the ability to feel empathy for clients, loved ones and co-workers. "Nothing left to give".
- May or may not include vicarious trauma
- On a spectrum

A serious, but natural consequence of regularly helping people who are suffering and traumatized.

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14

Peer descriptions of Compassion Fatigue

When you have nothing left to give, you have given so much there is nothing left.

The cumulative toll that we, as individuals, experience as a result of exposure to suffering, hardship, crisis and trauma.

Because of your kindness, compassion and empathy, you start to absorb the emotions and reactions of the people you are helping.

(Austin, W. et al., 2012)

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15

Other descriptions Compassion Fatigue

Its as though I don't have anymore to give emotionally, so I lose empathy for them. I become cynical or disbelieving in what they say.

Dealing with sick people and giving them what they need emotionally... you just give, give, give all the time.

Every time I'm at work, I feel dread. It's hard to fill my bucket.

(Austin, W. et.al., 2012)

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16

Vicarious Trauma

The transmission of traumatic stress through observation and/or hearing others' stories of traumatic events and results in a shift in your world view and sense of meaning. Some helpers also develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

- Intrusive thoughts/memories
- Nightmares
- Psychological distress at exposure to cues
- Avoidance of thoughts/memories
- Change in Worldview – “no one can be trusted” “the world is completely dangerous.

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(Saakvitne, K. and Pearlman, L., 1996)

Strategy #1 Reduce Trauma Exposure

The more trauma one is exposed to, the more likely they will experience vicarious trauma. One strategy is to limit trauma input.

Try to reduce:

- Number of people who have trauma per day
- Informal debriefing with colleagues
- Real trauma in news, TV, internet, social media
- Fictional trauma

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(Richard, C. 2018)

18

The Irritability Phase

Zealot, plus extra requests, plus limited boundaries = less self-care and lifestyle resiliency factors. Add more trauma = compassion fatigue symptoms begin.

- Begin to cut corners – avoid clients – hide
- Daydream or distracted when working with people
- Oversights, mistakes, hard to concentrate
- Distance ourselves from friends and co-workers

(Baranowsky and Gentry, 2012)

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19

The Withdrawal Phase

- Enthusiasm turns sour – bubble bursts
- Clients become a blur – run together – seen as irritants and not individuals
- Complains made at work and personal life
- Tired all the time – don't want to talk about work or admit our profession (fake job)
- Neglect family – co-workers/friends/clients/self

(Baranowsky and Gentry, 2012)

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20

The Zombie Phase

- Auto pilot
- Not connected to our thoughts and feelings
- Disconnected from colleagues/peers/family/friends
- Lost compassion for people you work with
- Hear but do not understand, lost our meaning and value as helpers

(Baranowsky and Gentry, 2012)

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21

Burnout or Sustainable Caring

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22

Burnout

Extreme circumstances. It describes anyone whose health is suffering or whose outlook on life has turned negative because of the impact or overload of their work.

Signs and Symptoms have become chronic and physical illness has developed.

Brief interventions no longer help. Psychological and/or medical assistance is necessary.

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23

Burnout

Associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or doing your job effectively.

These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset.

They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive environment.

(Proop, 2013)

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24

The Day to Day Experience of Compassion Fatigue

- Dread for work (Sunday night dread)
- Day dreaming about new job
- Cancelling plans with family/friends
- Calling in sick – more illness
- If not trauma then “trivial” and “must be nice factor”
- Emotional Eating/Drinking
- Excessive TV/sleep
- Annoyance with patients/clients/students/colleagues (so needy)
- Higher generalized anxiety
- Numb. Just don’t care anymore. Lack of empathy
- Loss of hope – wondering if really making a difference – feel like a hypocrite (crying on way to work)

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25

Sustainable Caring

- Caring is defined as things that are done to keep someone healthy and safe etc.
- Sustainable is defined as being able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed.
- Sustainable Caring is as being able to consistently provide compassionate care, with resilience, to the pain and suffering of others.

(Richard, C. 2018)

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26

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- What are ACEs?
- Adverse Childhood Experiences – trauma and toxic stress experienced in childhood that can have a negative impact on human development and long term physical and mental health in adulthood.

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27

Toxic Stress

Toxic Stress impacts the development of the brain, the cardiovascular system, the immune system and more.

Stress response is in a heightened state – is triggered more easily than in those who’s development did not occur within those same conditions.

Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw>



National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (n.d.). Toxic stress derails healthy development

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28

The ACEs Study

- ACEs study: is a research study conducted by the American health maintenance organization Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Participants were recruited to the study between 1995 and 1997 and received long-term follow up for health outcomes. The study has demonstrated an association of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) with health and social problems as an adult.

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29

The ACEs Questionnaire

The ACE questionnaire

There are 10 primary childhood traumas measured in the ACE Study.

- Five are personal, including; physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect.
- Five are related to other family members, including; a parent who’s an alcoholic, a mother who’s a victim of domestic violence, a family member in jail, a family member diagnosed with a mental illness, and the disappearance of a parent through divorce, death or abandonment.

Questionnaire: <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>

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30

Long-term impact

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for the following:

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work/academic performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence

Resource TEDMED: [Gurke Harris, M.D. \(2014\). How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime.](#)

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31

Trauma-Informed Compassion Fatigue Resiliency

People in helping fields may have a history of trauma/toxic stress

- Hypersensitive stress response
- Regular exposure to pain/suffering or trauma
- Regular exposure to witnessing risks
- Empathizing with intense emotions (sadness, fear, anger, rage)
- Working with public and exposed to viruses
- Stressful work environments with heavy workloads – often understaffed
- More stress can lead to increase perception of risk, struggling with boundaries, working longer, putting needs aside = more stress, reduced resiliency. Adds up over time. Perfect storm for compassion fatigue or burnout

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32

Caring Safely for Sustainable Caring

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33

Caring Safely for Sustainable Caring

Developing skills for sustainable caring:

- **Personal Protective Factors**
 - Lifestyle – monitoring and managing daily nourishment
 - Personal healing – past losses or traumatic experiences
 - **Increasing resilience:** Self-trust, Self-compassion, **Self-regulation**, Limit setting, Communicating needs and desires, Accurate perception of others (particularly if you have a history of ACEs/Trauma)

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Caring Safely for Sustainable Caring

Developing skills for sustainable caring:

- **Professional Protective Factors**
 - Training and education in your field
 - Knowing how to protect yourself from emotional contagion and vicarious trauma
 - Clinical supervision that addresses compassion fatigue
 - Workplace policies promoting compassion fatigue protective factors
 - Peer support for professional support and personal empathy
 - Grieving the pain and suffering you see

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The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction
 Burnout
 Secondary Traumatic Stress (Compassion Fatigue)

(Proqol, 2018)
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Strategy #2 Emotional Regulation

- Watch for warning signs that you're stress response has been triggered
- Deep Breathing Vs. Shallow Breathing
- Practice alone and with people you are helping (takes practice)
- Sticky note reminder

Deep Breathing Handout and Guided Audio

(Richard, C. 2015)

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37

Strategy #3 Limit Setting

How many people go above and beyond their role, which results in working through lunches, not taking breaks, staying late, taking on extra work?

Why? So many reasons!

- Lack of and/or inefficient resources in organization/community
- Fearing someone else won't do it properly
- Have a difficult time saying "no or fear of conflict"
- Perceived or real threat of risk
- Perfectionist tendencies

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(Richard, C. 2018)

38

Strategy #3 Practice Setting Limits

- Setting limits with the people you help – appointment times, clear roles and expectations – good for you and for people who have a history of trauma
- Setting limits within the workplace – your availability, your workload, how your time is spent
- Setting limits with family and friends – it's okay to say "no" to take care of you. I'll give you a resource on how to do this©
- Setting limits with self – loving discipline. Work hours, nourishment, how time is spent.

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39

Summary

- Know the concepts
- Know the phases – determine which phase you are in
- Take the assessment
- Limit your trauma input
- Practice emotional regulation to prevent emotional contagion
- Practice setting limits
- Get additional help if needed

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Caring Safely® Online Program

Personal Program:

- Guided support for long-term change
- Personal growth program to explore deeper barriers (our beliefs, habits, urges, perfectionist tendencies)
- Connect with peers from around the world for support

Professional Program:

- Teach managers/supervisors how to implement compassion fatigue protective factors
- Training to specialize in compassion fatigue and how to develop their own training for their own field/niche

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Special price for workshop attendees through this link:
[Caring Safely Program – Workshop Attendee Rate](#)

Early Bird Registration Bonus:
 Immediate access to three recorded online classes:

- How to Cope With Anxiety
- How to Cope With Depression
- Mindfulness for Stress, Anxiety, Anger and Sadness

Caring Safely is a Certified Educational Institute in Canada
[Questions: char@caringsafely.org](mailto:char@caringsafely.org)

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Workshop Bonus!

Book – The Art of Saying “No” With Grace and Respect.
Helps with strategy #3

Check your email after this workshop to access download

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43

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44
