

Understanding and Preventing Compassion Fatigue in the Community Housing Sector

Addressing and mitigating compassion fatigue for professionals



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Agenda Items

1. The Important Stuff
2. The Really Important Stuff



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Introduction to Compassion Fatigue

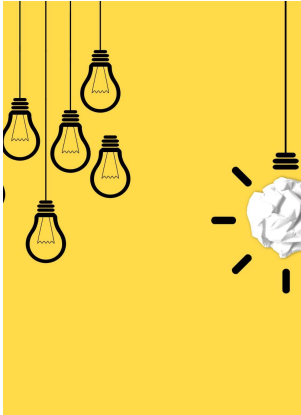
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Definition and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

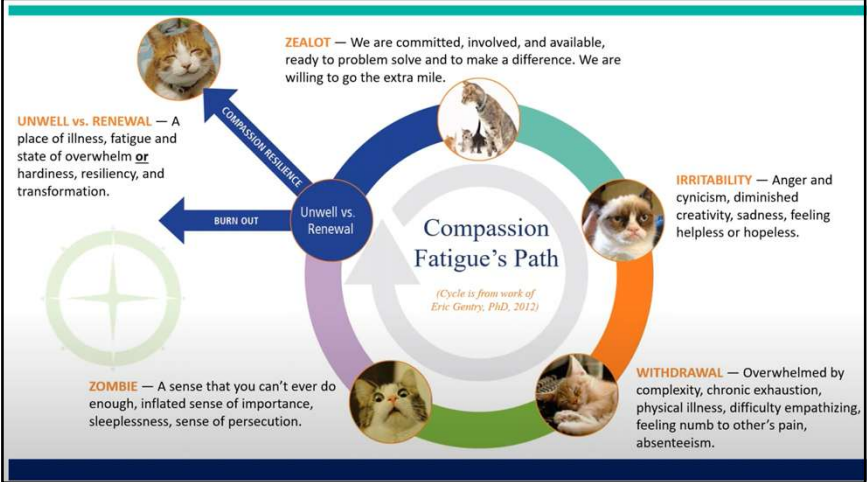
Emotional Exhaustion
One of the primary symptoms of compassion fatigue is emotional exhaustion, where individuals feel drained and unable to cope.

Feelings of Hopelessness
Individuals experiencing compassion fatigue may encounter feelings of hopelessness, impacting their outlook on work and life.

Decline in Job Satisfaction
Compassion fatigue can lead to a significant decline in job satisfaction, affecting performance and engagement.



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Causes and Risk Factors

- High Workloads**
 High workloads can lead to stress and burnout, contributing significantly to compassion fatigue among caregivers.
- Exposure to Trauma**
 Consistent exposure to traumatic situations can impact mental health and lead to compassion fatigue in helping professions.
- Insufficient Support Systems**
 Lack of support systems can leave caregivers feeling isolated, making them more vulnerable to compassion fatigue.

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Impact on Professionals in the Community Housing Sector


Effects of Burnout
 Burnout can lead to decreased productivity and negatively influence the quality of services. Addressing it is essential for community well-being.

Fostering a Healthier Environment
 Creating a supportive work environment helps mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue and promotes better service delivery.

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Identifying Signs and Symptoms

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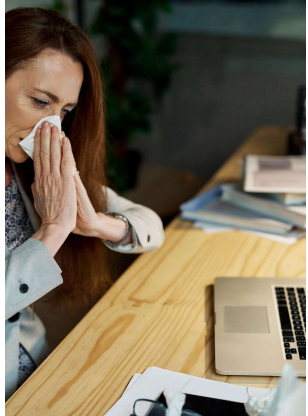
Emotional and Physical Symptoms

Emotional Symptoms
Common emotional symptoms include anxiety, irritability, and social withdrawal, affecting overall well-being.

Physical Symptoms
Physical symptoms can manifest as chronic fatigue, insomnia, or unexplained aches, impacting daily life.

Importance of Awareness
Awareness of these symptoms is crucial for early intervention and seeking appropriate help.

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Behavioral Indicators

Increased Absenteeism
Frequent absences from work can signal underlying issues such as compassion fatigue or burnout among employees.

Decreased Performance
A noticeable decline in employee performance may be a red flag for compassion fatigue requiring immediate attention.

Withdrawal from Colleagues
When employees start to isolate themselves and withdraw from interactions, it can be a sign of emotional fatigue.

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Self-Assessment Tools

Evaluating Emotional Health
Self-assessment tools are designed to help individuals evaluate their emotional well-being effectively.

Identifying Compassion Fatigue
These tools can help in recognizing the signs of compassion fatigue to address it promptly.

Guiding Support and Coping
Self-assessment tools provide guidance for seeking support and developing effective coping strategies.

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Dr. Gabor Maté

There is no such thing as compassion fatigue ...

... there is only compassion denial ...

... denying compassion to yourself.

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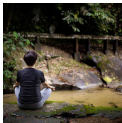
Practical Strategies to Prevent Compassion Fatigue

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Practical Strategies to Practise Self-Compassion

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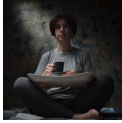
Building Emotional Resilience



Mindfulness Practices
Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, help individuals stay present and reduce stress.

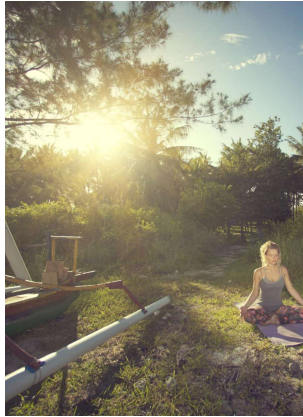


Supportive Relationships
Fostering supportive relationships with friends and colleagues can enhance emotional resilience and provide necessary encouragement during tough times.



Self-Care Activities
Engaging in self-care activities, such as exercise or hobbies, helps recharge and maintain mental well-being.

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Effective Stress Management Techniques

Deep Breathing Techniques
Deep breathing exercises can help calm the mind and reduce stress levels quickly and effectively.

Regular Exercise
Engaging in regular physical activity can significantly alleviate stress and improve overall mental health.

Setting Boundaries
Establishing personal boundaries is crucial for maintaining mental wellness and managing stress effectively.

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Establishing Healthy Work-Life Balance

Importance of Work-Life Balance
Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for emotional well-being and preventing burnout among professionals.

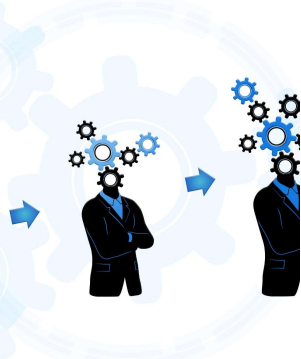
Disconnecting After Hours
Encouraging professionals to disconnect from work after hours promotes personal time and reduces stress effectively.

Prioritizing Personal Time
Prioritizing personal time over work commitments can lead to improved mental health and emotional resilience.

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Creating Supportive Work Environments

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Promoting Peer Support and Mentorship


Peer Support Systems
Implementing peer support systems can foster collaboration and create a network of support for professionals facing challenges.

Mentorship Programs
Mentorship programs provide experienced guidance that can help individuals navigate their career paths and personal development.

Emotional Support
Emotional support from peers and mentors can enhance resilience and improve overall job satisfaction among professionals.

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Implementing Wellness Programs




Mental Health Benefits
Wellness programs focus on mental health, promoting emotional well-being to combat compassion fatigue in various settings.

Counseling Support
Offering counseling sessions as part of wellness programs can provide individuals with essential support and coping strategies.

Relaxation Activities
Incorporating relaxation activities, such as yoga or meditation, enhances the effectiveness of wellness programs for emotional well-being.

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Encouraging Open Communication and Feedback



Importance of Open Communication
Open communication creates a supportive environment where individuals feel safe to express their thoughts and concerns.

Identifying Compassion Fatigue
Encouraging feedback helps in early identification of compassion fatigue, allowing for timely interventions and support.

Building Trust
Transparency in communication fosters trust among team members, enhancing collaboration and teamwork.


Promoting Team Problem-Solving
Collective problem-solving becomes easier when team members feel comfortable sharing ideas and feedback openly.

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Utilizing Resources and Tools

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Accessing Professional Help and Counseling



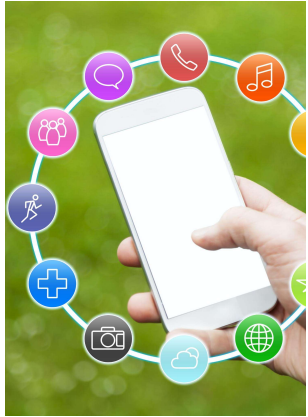
Importance of Professional Help
Accessing professional counseling services is vital for individuals facing compassion fatigue, providing essential support and guidance.

Available Resources
Understanding the available mental health resources can empower individuals to seek the help they need for recovery.

Guiding Towards Recovery
Professional help acts as a guiding force towards recovery, facilitating personal growth and emotional healing.

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Leveraging Technology and Apps for Mental Health



Mindfulness Apps
Mindfulness apps provide guided meditations and relaxation techniques to help users enhance their emotional well-being and reduce stress.

Online Support Communities
Online support communities connect individuals facing similar challenges, providing a platform for sharing experiences and emotional support.

Enhancing Emotional Well-Being
Leveraging technology and apps can significantly enhance emotional well-being and provide accessible mental health resources.

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"Self-care is not an indulgence. Self-care is a discipline. It requires tough-mindedness, a deep and personal understanding of your priorities, and a respect for both yourself and the people you choose to spend your life with." – Tami Forman

The Compass Model of Wellness is based on the work of Dr. Scott and Holly Stoner of Samaritan Family Wellness Center in Wisconsin, USA.
 The Compassion Resilience Toolkit (see ref.s)

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Appreciate Reflection on Competence

Consider for a moment the things that you value deeply. Specifically, the things you value most about:

Work
 Get the most out of educational, volunteer and employment activities

Organisation
 Manage time, priorities, money and belongings

- a) Yourself
- b) How you fulfill your role as a caregiver
- c) Your family

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Reflection

When do you feel most alive, most like yourself?
 What are you doing?
 With what or whom are you surrounded?

Core Values
 Develop a personal value system that determines your personal mission and supports your sense of meaning and purpose in your work

Rest & Play
 Balance work and play to renew yourself

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Stress Resilience
 Deal positively with the challenges of life

Care for my body
 Build healthy habits around your physical wellbeing, and end unhealthy habits

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Science Break



Dr Kelly McGonigal


0%

High Stress + Belief that it is bad = Risk of death increased by 43%
 High Stress + No belief that it is bad = Risk of death increased by ...



Volumetric

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STRENGTH

Listening and responding to stress in your body

- 1) How does your body let you know that you are experiencing stress?
- 2) Which are you most likely to tell yourself when you realise you are experiencing stress:
 - i. I've done it again! What's wrong with me that I can't stop feeling stressed?!
 - ii. Stress is a normal part of life's ups and downs; sometimes it can even be helpful.
- 3) What are two positive outcomes you have experienced as a result of feeling stress?
- 4) What responses to stress do you want to do more of, to build your stress resilience?
- 5) What responses would you like to change?

Stress Resilience
 Deal positively with the challenges of life

Care for my body
 Build healthy habits around your physical wellbeing, and end unhealthy habits

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HEART

Relationships
 Create and maintain healthy connections with others in your life

Emotions
 Express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way

What is Self-Compassion?

Self-Kindness
 Be loving towards ourselves, instead of self critical

Common Humanity
 Everyone Suffers. You are not perfect. No-one is. You are not alone.

Mindfulness
 Notice our struggle. Feel it, instead of being reactive. Be with it, avoiding self-judgement or overreaction.

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Conclusion

<p>Recognizing Compassion Fatigue Identifying the signs of compassion fatigue is crucial for professionals to address emotional exhaustion effectively.</p>	<p>Implementing Practical Strategies Adopting strategies such as self-care and peer support can help mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue.</p>	<p>Fostering Supportive Environments Creating a supportive work environment enhances emotional well-being and improves overall service delivery in community housing.</p>
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References & Resources

Compassion Resilience Toolkit. A free resource of the Wisconsin Initiative for Stigma Elimination (WISE) www.compassionresiliencetoolkit.org

Self Compassion by Dr Kristin Neff. Article including short (50 – 80 second) videos about how to be compassionate to ourselves. <https://self-compassion.org/what-is-self-compassion>

Two self assessment tools:

- a) Proqol <https://proqol.org/proqol-measure>
- b) Self-Compassion https://eliminatestigma.org/wp-content/uploads/Healthcare_Section8_WellnessCompassAssessmentFillable.pdf

Greatest Love of all: Songwriter(s): Linda Creed (lyrics), Michael Masser (music); **Recording Artist:** Whitney Houston; **Producer(s):** Michael Masser; **Studio:** Arista Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVzIVDIE72w&ab_channel=whitneyhoustonVEVO

Dr Kelly McGonigal, How to make Stress your Friend
https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend

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