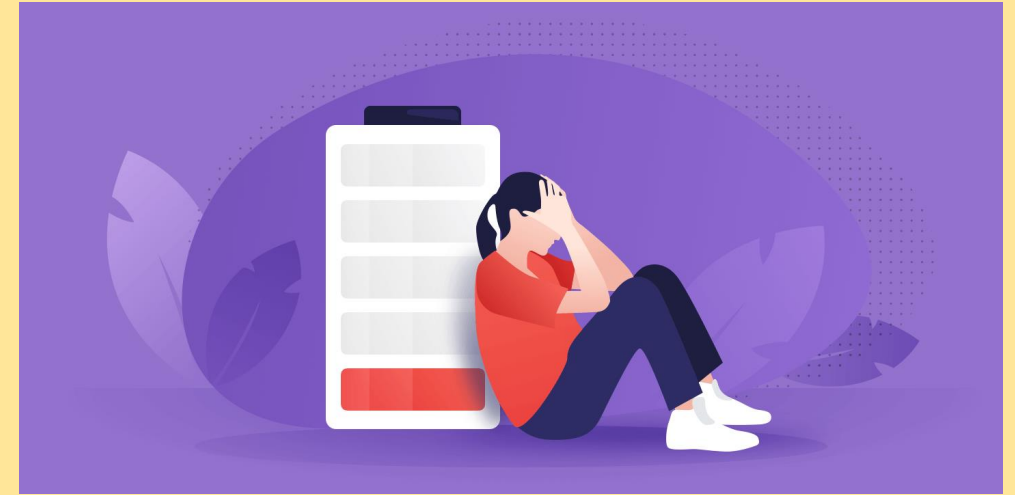


Who is at risk of suffering from compassion fatigue

Professionals in a care setting are thought to be most susceptible this usually includes nurses, physicians mental health workers, social workers, police officers, first responders and long term care workers These are just some of the jobs that can contribute to compassion fatigue Although working in these job roles can make you more susceptible to compassion fatigue any person can start internalizing trauma from the daily exposure in society to horrific images and stories in the media and news this leads to overexposure which gives the feeling of numbness to having to feel empathy all of the time.

In today's society keeping up to date and paying attention to what is happening can help ensure all individuals are informed citizens but with consistent news of mass shootings, natural disasters, hate crimes and international conflict all of this can be overwhelming, especially for care workers and those working in helping fields like social workers. This is especially important to stay mindful of their own personal needs in order to prevent compassion fatigue and prevent burnout. People develop compassion fatigue gradually it is a long process and so is reversing the effects of compassion fatigue. Most of the time people may be able to be fully restored by taking a break from work and taking some time for themselves but some people with severe compassion fatigue will need to make big life changes and make their own wellbeing physically and mentally a priority.

Compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress)



What is compassion fatigue

Compassion fatigue also known as secondary traumatic stress is a feeling of isolation and detachment experienced when caregivers of individuals in a caregiving setting repeatedly engage with patients in distress. Compassion fatigue hinders an individual's empathy and can cause extreme tension. Compassion fatigue is often associated with individuals in jobs as caregivers this is because in their roles as care givers they are frequently exposed to their clients pain and suffering. Individuals in caregiving settings are at risk when the amount of compassion and empathy provided exceeds their ability to cope physically, emotionally and psychologically. Compassion fatigue used to be confined to care workers or aid workers but in today's society is a common occurrence.

What are the signs of compassion fatigue

- Feeling burdened by the suffering of others
- Blaming others for their suffering
- Isolating yourself
- Loss of pleasure in life
- Difficulty concentrating
- Insomnia
- Physical and mental fatigue
- Bottling up your emotions
- Anger
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Low self esteem
- Misuse of alcohol, drugs or food
- Lack of sleep
- Workaholism
- Poor self care
- Depression
- Helplessness



Understanding compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress)

compassion fatigue is sometimes described in some literature using terms such as vicarious traumatization, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. Even though compassion fatigue is sometimes known as burnout, they are slightly different concepts. Compassion fatigue is highly treatable unlike burnout. Compassion fatigue can start suddenly whereas burnout mostly emerges over a long period of time. Severe cases of burnout can require a career change for the person experiencing it, but someone suffering from compassion fatigue can often make changes before making changes to their work environment. Compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress) can be a symptom or sign of other stressors. Because people in society are trained to show compassion and empathy in order for a career in a care setting to be effective, they are highly vulnerable to emotional stress and compassion fatigue. For most people compassion fatigue can have personal implications if left untreated, especially if they are providing care services that are not benefiting patients under their care.

How is compassion fatigue affecting todays society?

In todays society people have never been more aware of the horrific events that are occurring around the world everyday all of this contributes to people that are suffering with compassion fatigue with growing numbers of people in todays society feeling like they are becoming numb to the headlines of tragic events. There is so much bad news that it can begin to feel like you are running out of emotions and feeling burdened to feel sympathetic all of the time. In general, frequently viewing images and reading stories of different tragedy's may bring about emotional exhaustion, while influencing people in our society to become cynical, desensitized, and resistant to giving help to those who are suffering. In addition to personal implications, compassion fatigue in the general public has societal implications as well, most importantly when mass donations are needed for larger scale disasters.

“If it is true that empathy is a necessary motivator for making the world a better place, what happens when we feel bombarded every day with the details of local and global disasters, with every shocking crime, political scandal and climate calamity here and abroad?”

(ELISA GABBERT, ND, THE GUARDIAN)

People who work in a care setting enrol themselves in their profession because they want to help and assist people that are in need. However the more exposed they are to the experiences and feelings of the people they care for it starts to become compassion fatigue. When compassion fatigue is left untreated it can lead to a decline in the general health of the individual suffering it and if they are working in a care setting it also affects the people they care for there may be higher risk for a decrease in the carer and patient relationship, abuse, or neglect this is why it is vital that steps are taken to prevent compassion fatigue.

Compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress) is a serious problem in todays society but the more it is acknowledged it will help people stay connected to the good that is in their own life and in society as well.

rationale

This leaflet will be focusing on the topic of compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress), it will be defining what it compassion fatigue is and why this issue is more of a problem in todays society. This leaflet will also be giving the reader more information on who is at a higher risk of developing compassion fatigue and letting the reader know the signs and symptoms of someone dealing with it whilst also giving the reader an understanding of what this issue is and what compassion fatigue is doing to todays society. While wanting to keep the leaflet as academic looking as possible brighter colours have been used to draw attention. the headers on this leaflet have been put in bold to help the reader find the information they are looking for within the leaflet easier to find. The information in this leaflet has been put in an easy to read font with headings been made slightly larger than the body of texts within to again help the reader find the information wanted as easy as possible. Images have been used on this leaflet to draw attention and both images portray characters that may be suffering with the issue of compassion fatigue, the image used on the front of the leaflet is in a contrasting colour to the rest of the leaflet again this is to try and make the leaflet eye catching to potential readers. The information in the leaflet has been put in neatly laid out columns to keep it easy to read.

references

(ELISA GABBERT, ND, THE GUARDIAN)

Can be found at

<https://www.niemanlab.org/reading/is-compassion-fatigue-inevitable-in-an-age-of-24-hour-news/>

<https://nciph.sph.unc.edu/schnurse/2016handouts/compassion-slides.pdf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/02/is-compassion-fatigue-inevitable-in-an-age-of-24-hour-news>

<http://www.compassionfatigue.org/pages/RunningOnEmpty.pdf>

Images used

Image 1

<https://www.nicereply.com/blog/compassion-fatigue/>

Image 2

<https://www.elderhelpofsandiego.org/compassion-fatigue/>