Avoiding Compassion Fatigue
Laura Luszcz

Have you ever thought about why you decided to become a teacher? Did the aspiration to teach stem from the desire to give, to impart knowledge, to help others, and to make a difference in the minds and hearts of your students? Did you want to inspire and motivate students to live up to their potential and succeed?

As faculty we know that our students regularly endure severe hardships, particularly during these harsh economic times. Compassion fatigue, sometimes known as 'secondary traumatic stress,' affects instructors who are exposed to the suffering of students. After the success of the FSC event in the fall of 2010, Avoiding Compassion Fatigue: Caring about the pains and needs of our students while maintaining a balanced life, this idea has been formulated into a 2-day workshop. Compassion fatigue is a natural consequence of stress resulting from caring about and helping those that are suffering. The outward signs that instructors experience, are displays of stress resulting from caring for others. Therefore, compassion fatigue is a set of symptoms, not a disease. So, once we are open to accepting the idea that compassion fatigue may be creating emotional, psychological or physical symptoms in our lives, we can look at our pain and learn new ways in which to react to it and channel it into positive, healthy actions.

In this workshop, we will be exploring the causes and symptoms of compassion fatigue, breaking the compassion fatigue cycle, developing and implementing particular strategies for managing it, and creating a plan of action. I will provide various tools and resources, along with a supportive environment, to foster coping mechanisms for Compassion Beyond Fatigue.