Compassion fatigue happens “when the milk of the human kindness dries up. You forget why you wanted to help people in the first place.” ~Frank M. Ochberg

Avoiding Compassion Fatigue

Caring About the Pains and Needs of Our Students While Maintaining a Balanced Life

Presented by: Laura (Luszcz) Mayuga
What experiences have you had with students’ stress & suffering?

• Transportation issues
• Financial hardships
• Evicted from apartment/Foreclosed home
• Homelessness
• Hunger
• Breakups/divorce
• Moving/kicked out
• Single parenting
• Mental & physical illnesses
• Death of loved ones
• Abusive relationships
• Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
• Rape
What is Compassion Fatigue (CF)?

- **Emotional residue** of exposure to working with suffering individuals.

- Giving a great deal of energy and compassion to others – but we are often unable to get enough back to reassure ourselves that the world is a hopeful place.

- We must not only contend with the normal stress or dissatisfaction of work, but also - **emotional & personal feelings** for the suffering.

- CF is an emotional & spiritual fatigue or exhaustion that takes over a person & causes a decline in his or her ability to **experience joy** or to **feel or care for others**.

- CF develops over time – taking weeks, sometimes years to surface. Overtime, the overuse of your **compassion skills becomes eroded**.
If you ever feel as though you are losing your sense of self or your capacity for enjoyment, and that your job is the primary focus that matters to you, then you may be suffering from compassion fatigue.

**The Compassion Fatigue Process**

1. Exposure to Suffering
2. Concern
3. Empathic Ability
4. Empathic Response
5. Detachment
6. Sense of Satisfaction
7. Residual Compassion Stress
8. Traumatic Memories
9. Compassion Fatigue
10. Other Life Demands
“The people who experience Compassion Fatigue are often the best and the brightest. They have extra sensitivity.”

And not giving instructors help can undermine not only the classroom, but the long-term mission of the college.

“If we don’t do something about Compassion Fatigue, we’re going to lose people.”

~ Charles Figley
Professor, School of Social Work Florida State University
Recognizing Compassion Fatigue

- Normal symptoms present in an individual could include:
  - Apathetic, sad - no longer finds activities pleasurable
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Mentally and physically tired
  - Preoccupied
  - In denial about problems
  - Irritability
  - Avoidance of certain tasks
  - Feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy
  - Excessive blaming
  - Bottled up emotions
  - Isolation from others
  - Receives unusual amount of complaints from others
  - Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions
  - Substance abuse used to mask feelings
  - Compulsive behaviors – overspending, overeating, gambling, sexual addictions
  - Poor self-care – hygiene, appearance
  - Legal problems, indebtedness
  - Reoccurrence of nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic event
  - Chronic physical ailments – gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
The First Step to Managing Compassion Fatigue

Acknowledging the Problem
When you are MINDFUL...
You can CARE FOR YOURSELF

10 things to do for yourself everyday

1. Get enough sleep
2. Eat nutritious foods
3. Do some exercise
4. Vary the work that you do
5. Do something pleasurable
6. Focus on what you did well
7. Learn from your mistakes – be kind to yourself
8. Share a private joke
9. Pray, meditate or relax
10. Support a colleague
Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
Today is a gift
That’s why we call it
the present

82 Presents to Give Yourself

*Personal Prevention of Compassion Fatigue*
Compassion
BEYOND
Fatigue

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way;
On purpose,
In the present moment, and
Non-judgmentally.
~Jon Kabat-Zinn
Further Insight...

• **Self-evaluation** handout of compassion satisfaction, burnout & compassion fatigue

• Open heart meditation (free guided meditation to download)
• itunes – FREE podcasts for mediation

• [www.Meetup.com](http://www.Meetup.com) - Support systems & common activities 😊

• [www.Dharmaseed.com](http://www.Dharmaseed.com)

[www.compassionfatigue.org/](http://www.compassionfatigue.org/)
[www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org)
Thank You!