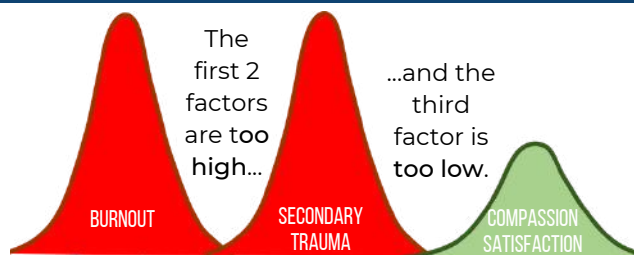


# HOW TO COPE WITH COMPASSION FATIGUE



Clinically speaking,\*  
compassion fatigue is the  
combination of three factors:



## CAUSES

### BURNOUT

Working in a stressful, demanding environment where you feel you have little to no control.

### SECONDARY TRAUMA

Being traumatized by witnessing the trauma of others.

### COMPASSION SATISFACTION

This is the pleasure that you, as a caregiver, take in your work.

## SYMPTOMS

You suffer from:

- loss of energy ("I can't get out of bed today");
- loss of enthusiasm ("What's the point?"); and
- loss of effectiveness ("My work is starting to slide").

You suffer from:

- fear and anxiety;
- intrusive thoughts;
- feeling helpless or unsafe;
- feeling frustrated or angry about feeling unsafe.

You feel passionate about investing time and energy into others – this is a source of joy and fulfillment.

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS)

Professional Quality of Life Scale

NOTE: The ProQOL also measures the other 2 factors

## COPING STRATEGIES

- Be aware of signs of stress & burnout.
- Practice self-care (sleep, exercise, nutrition).
- Have annual health checks.
- Maintain work-life balance.
- Stay connected to your peer network.
- Stay connected to friends and family.
- Address burnout factors at their source. Create healthy boundaries.
- Be aware of how your own moods, thoughts, and perceptions are feeding stress & burnout.

- Be aware of signs of trauma.
- Seek professional treatment as needed.
- Practice self-care (sleep, exercise, nutrition).
- Maintain work-life balance.
- Join a support group.
- Address traumatic factors at their source.
- Create healthy boundaries.
- Practice spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer).
- Practice self-compassion, e.g. accept your feelings as normal after trauma. Be kind and patient with yourself.

- Make sure your self-care routines are strong enough to balance the stress and emotional impact of your work.
- Assume positive intent from your colleagues.
- Align your work to your personal values.
- Find meaning and purpose in your work.
- Keep a gratitude journal about your work experiences.
- Identify what's important to you, what brings you joy and fulfillment. Spend more time doing that.

\*Adapted from: Figley Institute (2012) *Basics of Compassion Fatigue*.

