

COMPASSION FATIGUE

What is compassion fatigue?

- Compassion fatigue is a profound emotional and physical erosion that occurs from exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events or significant emotional distress that occurs when helpers are unable to refuel and regenerate.

What are the symptoms of compassion fatigue?

- **Cognitive Symptoms**
 - ▶ Decreased concentration, preoccupation with trauma, apathy.
- **Emotional Symptoms**
 - ▶ Powerlessness, anxiety, guilt, anger, fear, sadness, depression, reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy, resentment, feelings of professional helplessness.
- **Behavioral Symptoms**
 - ▶ Irritability, withdrawing, poor sleep, isolating, increased substance use, exaggerated sense of responsibility, impaired decision making, forgetfulness.
- **Spiritual**
 - ▶ Questioning the meaning of life, hopelessness, purposelessness, loss of faith.
- **Somatic**
 - ▶ Sweating, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, impaired immune system, headaches, sleep impairments.

What are some ways to prevent compassion fatigue?

- Practice self-care – engage daily in activities you enjoy.
- Reach out to someone you love every day.
- Exercise and eat properly.
- Get adequate amounts of restful sleep.
- Find reasons to laugh.
- Enjoy quiet time each day to recharge.
- Consider seeing a counselor or another professional to help you regain perspective or passion.

