

# Dealing with Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

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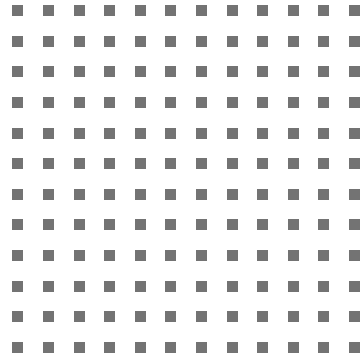
# Introductions and Logistics

# Learning Objectives

- ▶ Explain the difference between compassion fatigue and burnout
- ▶ Identify signs and symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue
- ▶ Select and Implement 3 personalized self-care actions
- ▶ Apply the strategies of compassionate curiosity and locus of control when providing care to patients/clients

# Let's Take a Pause...

## Square Breathing Exercise



# Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion arising from **caring for others**
- ▶ Occupational hazard of working in the helping fields-sometimes referred to as "the cost of caring"

# Signs and Symptoms

- ▶ Lack of energy and interest in helping others
- ▶ Change in worldview
- ▶ Procrastination and avoidance
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Physical symptoms (sleep problems, GI problems, headaches)
- ▶ Intrusive thoughts
- ▶ Ethical violations or cutting corners

# Burnout

“A syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy.”

(World Health Organization)

# Signs and Symptoms

- ▶ Frequent Illness
- ▶ Cynicism
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Irritability



# Compassion Fatigue Vs. Burnout

<b>Compassion Fatigue</b>	<b>Burnout</b>
Can have a rapid onset after exposure to traumatic material	Emerges over time
Caused by exposure to traumatic material	Caused by work conditions
Impact of helping others	Impact of stressful workplace
Quicker recovery time	Longer recovery time

# Self Assessment

- ▶ Self-Assessment for Professional Quality of Life (Burnout, Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue)

# Collective Trauma and Grief of COVID-19

- ▶ Collective trauma- experiencing in “real time” with our community
- ▶ Lack of control
- ▶ Lack of certainty, including an end-date
- ▶ Ambiguous/anticipatory grief and loss
- ▶ Everyone is experiencing some type of loss
- ▶ Accepting that this is our reality and our “normal for now”
- ▶ We won’t make it out of this unscathed- there will be loss and there are no perfect answers

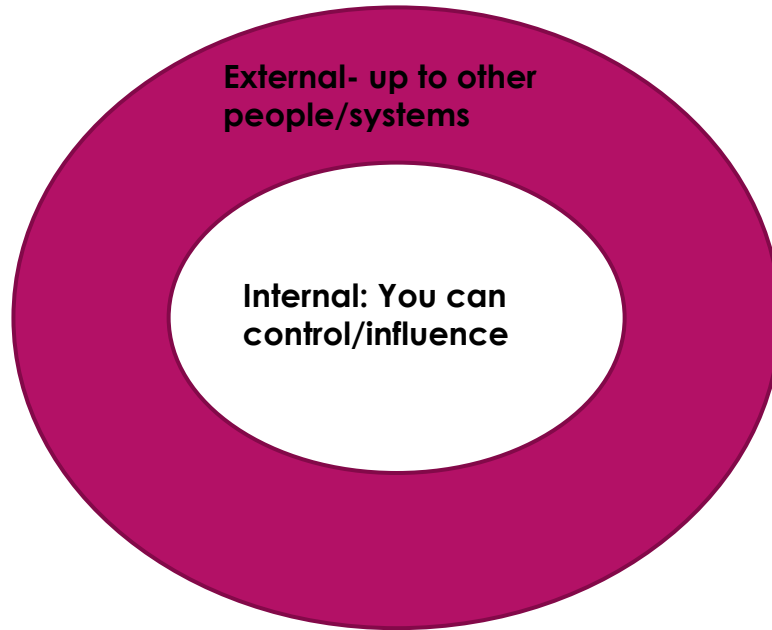
# Compassion Fatigue and Decisions of Others

- ▶ Many healthcare workers share frustration and exhaustion related to others' decisions (i.e. vaccine hesitancy, lack of masks and social distancing)
- ▶ Compassionate curiosity and empathy, as well as locus of control can be strategies to assist

# Compassionate Curiosity

- ▶ Pausing and getting curious about ourselves and others
- ▶ Asking questions to understand where someone is coming from

# Locus of Control



# Self Care

*Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health*

- Raphailia Michael, MA



# Manage Media Input

- ▶ Set specific times in your schedule when you will check a reputable source for a specific amount of time.
- ▶ Set an action item step after you read the news, such as donating money to your favorite small business, calling your representative, or just taking deep breaths.
- ▶ Avoid scrolling- most phones have apps so you can set limits on the amount per day.
- ▶ Avoid videos- especially websites with autoplay!
- ▶ Avoid checking news right when you wake up and right before bed.
- ▶ If you have high trauma exposure at work, consider different types of entertainment that won't expose you to more traumatic or violent content.





# Take care of your body

- ▶ Prepare basic need items such as medications, prescriptions, and some healthy pantry-stable foods.
- ▶ Eat a balanced diet- comfort foods can be good in moderation but also try to get enough protein, fruits, and vegetables.
- ▶ Drink water throughout the day.
- ▶ Take stretch breaks.
- ▶ Exercise.



# Take Care of your Emotional Health

- ▶ Feel your feelings.
- ▶ See a therapist- many are offering telehealth options.
- ▶ Engage virtually with religious communities- many are streaming services or offering other options.
- ▶ Cook or learn a new hobby.
- ▶ Read an inspirational book or listen to a podcast.
- ▶ Explore a mantra- "I will focus on day by day" or "This is a new situation. I will do the best I can today."
- ▶ Make a mental note (or even better, physically write down) positive things you see happening.
- ▶ Meditate.
- ▶ Say No.



# Simple Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment, in order to create a feeling of calm.

- ▶ Notice your feet on the ground.
- ▶ In the morning, visualize a peaceful color/shield around you before starting your daily routine.
- ▶ Have something to touch while sitting with patients or engaging in a difficult conversation with a family member or colleague (such as a ring, small stone, etc).
- ▶ Pay attention to the tastes, smells, sensations of what you are eating vs. rushing through your lunch while checking email.

# Practice Self-Care in your work

- ▶ Healthy and supportive relationships with colleagues and supervisors are a critical part of our self-care .
- ▶ Many people's routines have changed, whether they are teleworking, working different hours, or implementing new ways to care for patients. Be patient with yourself and others in adjusting to these new schedules.
- ▶ Write out a tentative schedule and a couple goals at the beginning of each day. Include scheduled breaks for movement and food.
- ▶ Schedule check ins with team members and supervisors- video is ideal! Take time to talk about how you are feeling.
- ▶ Engage in rituals/routines to separate the boundary between work and free time.
- ▶ Find time to work on long term passion projects.
- ▶ Consider what you do have control over- scheduling patients with a variety of types of concerns, working on a passion project
- ▶ Consider creating a "have done" list of accomplishments in addition to your "to-do" list


# For Leaders/Managers

- ▶ If you are a manager, think about what you can implement **and model** for your team.
- ▶ Practice what you preach: take leave, don't send emails late at night, and be honest with staff about some challenges you are having and what you are doing for self-care.
- ▶ Anxiety is contagious and so is calm: Your role is to take care of yourself in addition to taking care of your staff and helping them build up their resilience to stress.

# Share Responsibility

- ▶ We are working at a challenging time and responses will require the skills and work of many different people and systems.
- ▶ A temptation can be to try to be everything to all people, especially when other systems aren't working correctly- it is ok and necessary to ask for help.
- ▶ Remember that the current situation is still new and your role is also staying well- this is a marathon and not a sprint.
- ▶ Be aware of negative self-talk that can lead to burnout such as "It would be selfish to take a break" or "My needs are not important."





**You are not Atlas  
carrying the world  
on your shoulder.  
It is good to remember  
that the planet is  
carrying you.**

**-Vandana Shiva-**

Q & A



# Resources

- ▶ Kunitura, Ami: The Self Care Institute. <https://www.selfcareinstitute.com/>
- ▶ Lipsky, L. v. D., & Burk, C. (2009). *Trauma stewardship An everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- ▶ Richards, C. *Caring Safely: Prevent Compassion Fatigue and Burnout* <https://caringsafely.org/>
- ▶ “Stop, breathe, think” app/website- special meditations available for COVID  
<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/about/>

# Need More Support?

- ▶ National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
- ▶ Regional connection to behavioral health resources:
  - Maryland and Virginia: 211
  - DC: 1-888-793-4357
  - Link to resources for coping with stress related to COVID-19: <https://www.every-mind.org/7493-2/>



# Contact Information

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# CME Disclosures

Presenters and Planners: Aliya Jones, MD and Steve Whitefield, MD have reported no relevant financial relationships to disclose. Sarah E. Frazell, LCSW-C and Daniela Acero, LMSW have reported no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

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