

Compassion Fatigue and the Family Caregiver: When Caring Too Much Can Hurt

Caregivers Count Conference

Aging Services Collaborative

Saturday, May 19, 2018

9:30 – 10:45 am Campbell Community Center



Patricia Smith

Founder, Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project

www.compassionfatigue.org



To Weep for a Stranger: Compassion Fatigue in Caregiving



By Patricia Smith, Founder
Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project®

Healthy Caregiving

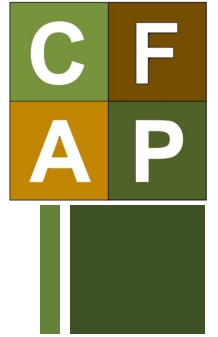
A Guide to Recognizing & Managing Compassion Fatigue



Presenter's Guide
Level 1

By Patricia Smith
Founder, Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project

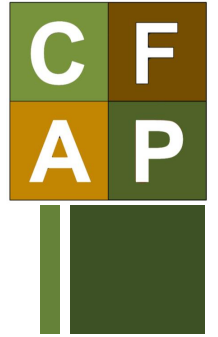
+ Today's Agenda



- What is Compassion Fatigue?
- Caregiver Stresses & Burnout
- Caring Too Much Can Hurt
- Managing Stress & Compassion Fatigue
- Strategies to Promote Wellness
- Resources

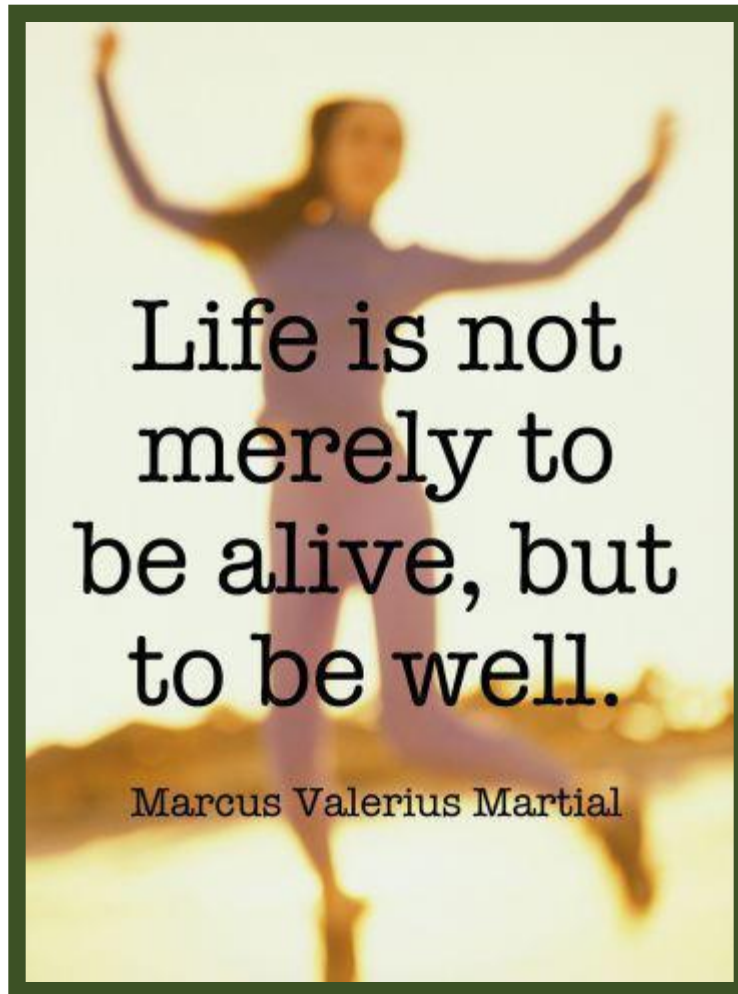


Healthy vs Unhealthy Caregivers



The ultimate goal in creating **healthy caregivers** is to master the art of resiliency and maintain high-functioning behaviors during the caregiving process.

+ Why Healthy Caregiving?





Seven Forms of Human Wellness

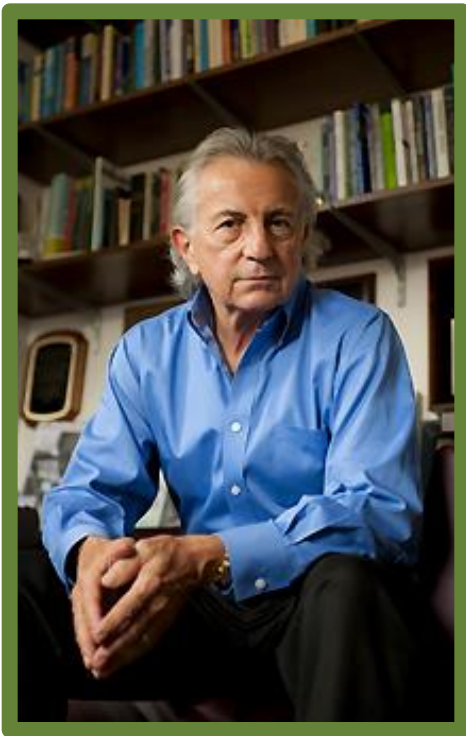


Physical Emotional Spiritual Social
Intellectual Environmental Occupational

When creating a Self-Care Plan, choose one area of wellness to begin your journey. Which area of improved wellness will be most beneficial to you?



What is Compassion Fatigue?

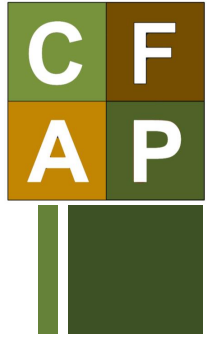


“Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper.”

Dr. Charles Figley
Professor, Paul Henry Kurzweg Distinguished Chair
Director, Tulane Traumatology Institute
Tulane University, New Orleans



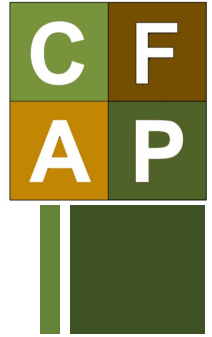
What is Compassion Fatigue?



Compassion Fatigue is a combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion associated with the trauma-related work we do where people or animals are in significant emotional pain and/or physical distress.



What are the Symptoms?



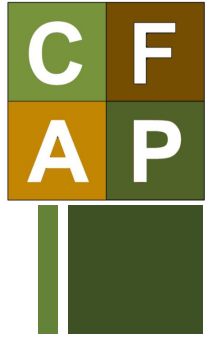
- Isolation
- Emotional outbursts
- Sadness, apathy
- Impulse to rescue anyone in need
- Persistent physical ailments
- Substance abuse
- Hypervigilance, hyperarousal
- Recurring nightmares or flashbacks
- Excessive complaints about colleagues, management, and/or those being helped

+ Remember...

**YOUR BODY
HEARS
EVERYTHING
YOUR MIND
SAYS.**



What is Compassion Fatigue?

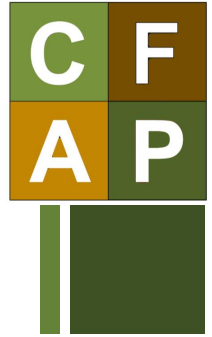


“I didn’t sign up for this. I just want it to be over. Caregiving goes on and on and on – and I want out. I’m to the point where I have nothing left to give.”

- Denise R. / Caregiver for 84-year-old mother



What is Compassion Fatigue?

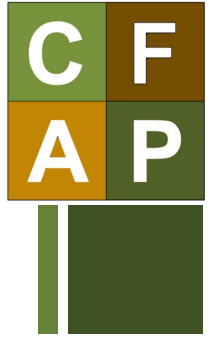


“Every time I hear my father call for me, I want to run away. I feel the anger rising in my throat and I want to tell him that he is ungrateful and mean. I swallow those awful thoughts and return to his bedside to give him what he needs. I am giving up my whole life and getting nothing but fatigue and guilt in return.”

- Marion S. – Caregiver for 102-year-old father



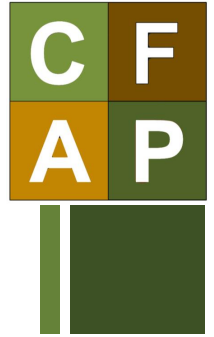
What is Compassion Fatigue?



“It’s time. She needs to go.”

- Thom C. - Caregiver for his 94-year-old mother

+ What are the Causes?



Other-Directedness: Putting the needs of others before our own

Providing service to others w/stress & trauma

Lack of personal and/or professional coping skills

Lack of personal boundaries

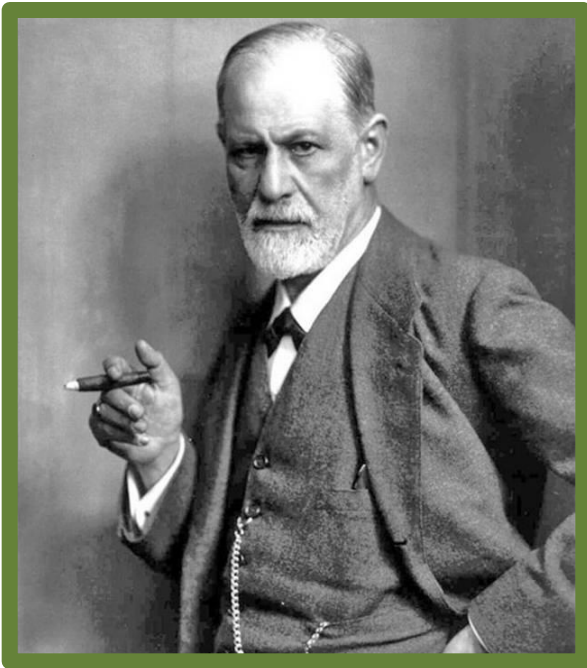
Overdeveloped sense of responsibility

Practice of minimizing traumatic events

History of unresolved childhood trauma



Unresolved Past Pain & Trauma

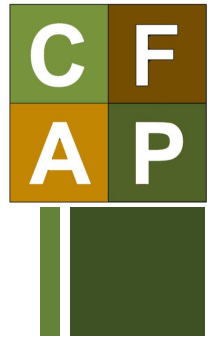


“Unexpressed emotions will
never die.

They are buried alive and will
come forth later in uglier
ways.”

Sigmund Freud

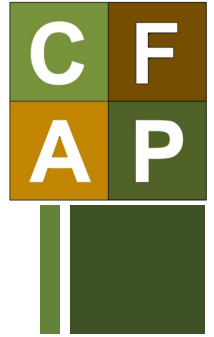
+ Caregiving Stresses



<p>Stress is about being anxious: caregiving-related overload, too much</p>	<p>Burnout is about being worn out: caregiving-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy, too little</p>
<p>PTSD is a primary stress disorder: caregiving-related exposure to trauma</p>	<p>STS is a secondary stress disorder: caregiving-related secondary exposure to extreme or traumatic events involving animals or humans.</p>



Five Assumptions of Family Caregivers



“I can handle it myself. I don’t need extra help.”

“After this is all over, I can get back to normal.”

“I can carry my caregiving tasks no matter what.”

“My traumatic symptoms will go away with time.”

“Friends & family members understand my stress.”



Trauma Can Create Compassion Fatigue in the Caregiver



- **Trauma** is an emotional response to a severe situation. Immediately after or during the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives.

- American Psychological Assn.

LifeAsACaregiver #101

It's almost like we become
two people-the one who
cares and the one who
wants to run.

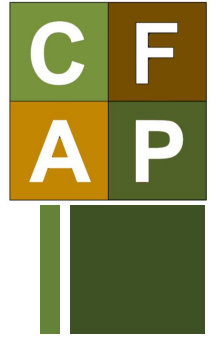
AgingCare.com
Supporting Caregivers



+ One Outcome of Stress



+ Managing Stress



- ✓ Identify your source(s) of stress
- ✓ Educate yourself about the effects of stress on YOUR body, mind and spirit
- ✓ Identify unhealthy coping methods
- ✓ Adopt healthy coping mechanisms
- ✓ Tighten your personal boundaries
- ✓ Practice empathic discernment



Learn to Protect Yourself 24/7...





When Caring Too Much Can Hurt



- In the U.S., the majority of **caregivers** (82%) care for one other adult, while 15% care for 2 adults, and 3% for 3 or more adults. Approximately 39.8 million **caregivers** provide care to adults (aged 18+) with a disability or illness or 16.6% of Americans.
- Majority of **caregivers** are female (60%), but 40 percent are male.
 - National Alliance for **Caregiving** and AARP (2015).



2017 Statistics



- **There are 40.4 million unpaid caregivers of adults ages 65 and older in the United States.**
- **Adults ages 45 to 64 are the most likely to be caregivers.** In fact, about a quarter (23%) of adults ages 45 to 64 cares for an aging adult.
- **Most caregiving for aging parents is not in the form of financial support or personal care.** More commonly, adults have helped their parent with errands, housework or home repairs.
- **Emotional support is a big part of caregiving.**
- **Most adults who have helped an aging parent see it as rewarding; relatively few say it is stressful.**
 - **The Bureau of Labor Statistics**



When Caring Too Much Can Hurt



Causes of High Stress in Family Caregiving:

- Intense, emotional relationships
- Financial drain
- Lack of sufficient time
- Lack of support from other family members
- Lack of training to provide the necessary care
- Lack of respect from those in our care
- Balancing caregiving with work
- Unsupportive boss, especially true for men
- Lack of understanding about medical terms & procedures

- - American Association of Retired People (AARP)



Strategies for Managing Caregiving Stress- Basics



- Delegate, whenever possible.
- Create a caregiving schedule.
- Know the support systems available to you.
- Know your rights as a caregiver.
- Work on accepting the situation.
- If you don't know, ASK.



Strategies for Managing Caregiving Stress- Personal



- Complete Advanced Directives.
- Put legal matters in order.
- Update others who care.
- If time, create an oral history with your loved one.
- Recognize possible trauma symptoms and work to create wellness in your life.
- Practice self-compassion. You are living through a difficult time. Give yourself credit.



Strategies for Managing Compassion Fatigue



- ✓ Create balance between work, relationships & “me-time”
- ✓ Build a healthy support system
- ✓ Practice authentic, sustainable self-care daily
- ✓ Practice mindfulness
- ✓ Learn to manage triggers
- ✓ Stop slinging
- ✓ Remove yourself from emotional vampires
- ✓ Strengthen resiliency coping skills
- ✓ Create a Self-Care Plan (DOT)
- Take the Professional Quality of Life Self-Test
- Raise levels of Compassion Satisfaction

+ Mindfulness...





Know Your Triggers ...

- If the feelings are bigger than the situation, it's likely a trigger. A trigger is an intense reaction rooted in the past. When you're "triggered" it feels like a character attack.

+ Emotional Vampires...



- “Energy vampires are people who suck our energy dry. Everyone can benefit from skills on how to cope with them. You can especially benefit if you are an intuitive empath, who absorbs the pain and negativity of others into your body – and become exhausted by it.” – Dr. Judith Orloff

+ Sliming...



- Helpers who bear witness to the pain and suffering of others might notice that their own beliefs about the world are altered and possibly damaged by being repeatedly exposed to a traumatic situation. It is normal to want to share the details of what we are experiencing, but by doing that, we traumatize the receiver and re-traumatize ourselves.



Creating a Self-Care Plan



- Get to know yourself better.
- Write ONE measurable, accountable goal**

**DOT

+ The Way It Works...



A DREAM written down with a date
becomes a GOAL.

A GOAL broken down into steps
becomes a PLAN.

A PLAN backed by ACTION
becomes REALITY.



Set One Measurable, Accountable Goal



- I will go to the gym Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 45 minutes
- I will take a nutrition class this spring and apply what I learn to my daily diet
- I will lose 10 lbs in 3 months by keeping my calorie intake at 1500 calories daily

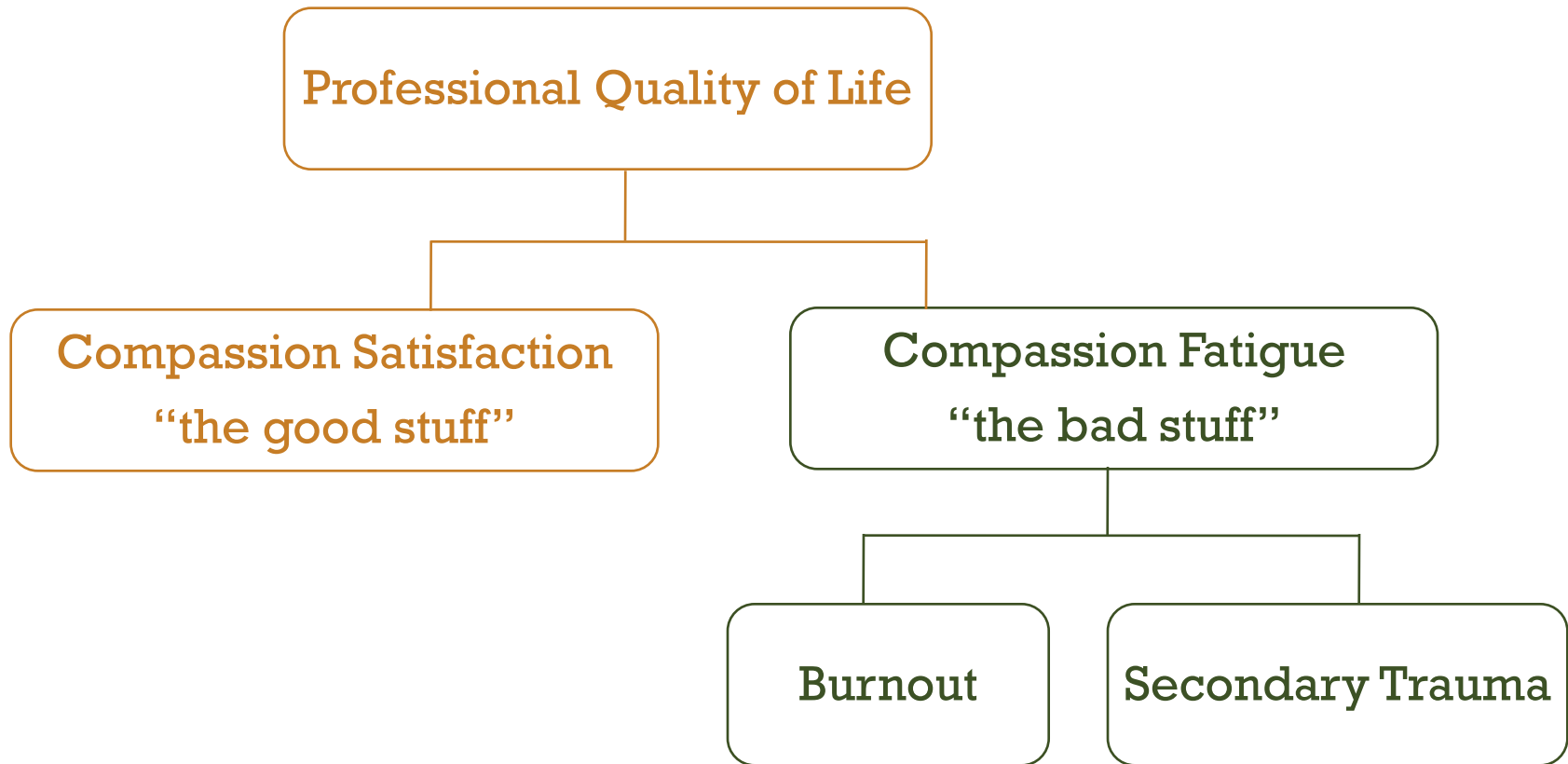
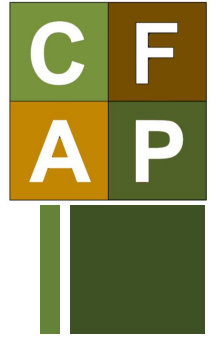
Hold yourself accountable!

+ Remember...

“ A GOAL
WITHOUT
A PLAN
IS JUST
A WISH ”



+ Professional Quality of Life





What is Compassion Satisfaction?



“Compassion Satisfaction is the pleasure we derive from doing the caregiving work we do. Higher levels of Compassion Satisfaction lead to becoming healthier, more effective caregivers.”

Source: Dr. Beth Hudnall Stamm



What is Compassion Satisfaction?



- The positive aspects of caregiving
- Pleasure & satisfaction derived from caring for another person.
- Compassion Satisfaction may be related to:
 - Creating a positive experience for your person.
 - Working as a team with other family members or friends.
 - Being able to “pay it forward” to the person in your care.
 - Recognizing that caregiving is a gift and the caregiver also benefits from the kindness.



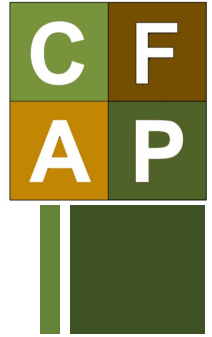
On-the-Spot Self Care Practices



- Breathe deeply
- Laugh
- Journal
- Take a brisk walk
- Stretch
- Talk to a trusted friend
- Eat a nutritious snack
- Meditate/pray
- Read a favorite quote or Mission statement
- Listen to music
- Doodle
- Practice Letting Go Ritual



Six Steps to Healthy Caregiving



1. Build Resiliency

2. Cultivate Compassion

3. Improve Coping Skills

4. Support your Helpers

5. Embrace Self-Confidence

6. Manage Change

+ Ten Words to Live By



Trauma	Emotional reaction following a difficult event
Empathy	Opening our hearts to the suffering of others
Compassion	Upon seeing suffering, we are moved to act
Compassion Fatigue	Secondary traumatic stress
Compassion Satisfaction	The pleasure we derive from caregiving work
Resiliency	Ability to bounce back after a traumatic event
Authenticity	Finding your True North, being honest
Sustainability	The behaviors & actions that carry us through
Vulnerability	Being fully open to a wide range of emotions
Kindness	Warm-hearted, friendly, generous nature.



A thought from author Henry James...



- “Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.”

+ What Kindness Doesn't Look Like...





What Kindness Does Look Like...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ And this...



+ True Heroism...



“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.”

- Arthur Ashe



RESOURCES



- www.compassionfatigue.org
- www.healthycaregiving.com
- www.facebook.com/compassionfatigue
- www.tedxsanjuanisland.com/2016/
- www.proqol.org
- www.drjudithorloff.com
- www.brenebrown.com
- www.greatergood.berkeley.edu



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