

The Lion's Den Youth Outreach Center Inc.



Saturday Feb. 18, 2006
Training Session
Dealing with Compassion Fatigue

What is *Compassion Fatigue*?

- Professionals who listen to the stories of fear, pain and suffering of others may feel similar fear, pain and suffering because they care.

- Professionals especially vulnerable to Compassion Fatigue (CF) include emergency care workers, counselors, mental health professionals, medical professionals, clergy, advocate volunteers, and human service workers. If you ever feel as though you are losing your sense of self to the clients you serve- you may be suffering from CF.

- The concept of Compassion Fatigue emerged only in the last several years in the professional literature. It represents the cost of caring about and for traumatized people.

- Compassion Fatigue is the emotional residue of exposure to working with the suffering, particularly those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events.

- Professionals who work with people, particularly people who are suffering, must contend with not only the normal stress or dissatisfaction of work, but also with the emotional and personal feelings for the suffering.

Let's take a test!!

- This self-test is not intended to provide medical advice or diagnosis. Consult a physician or mental health professional if you think you might be suffering from Compassion Fatigue.



- Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your current situation. Write in the number for the best response. Use one of the following answers.
1= Rarely/Never
2= At Times
3= Not Sure
4= Often
5= Very Often

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

- 1. I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 2. I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

- 3. I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

- 4. I feel estranged from others.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

■ 5. I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 6. I have outbursts of anger or irritability with little provocation.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

■ 7. I startle easily

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

■ 8. While working with a victim I thought about violence against the person or persons who victimized.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 9. I am a sensitive person.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 10. I have had flashbacks connected to my clients and families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 11. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 12. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 13. I have thought that I need to "work-through" a traumatic experience in my life.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 14. I have thought that I need more close friends.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 15. I have thought that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 16. I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.

Items about your clients and their families:



- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 17. I am frightened of things traumatized people and their family have said or done to me.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 18. I experience troubling dreams similar to a client of mine and their family.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 19. I have experienced intrusive thoughts of sessions with especially difficult clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 20. I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a client or their family.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

■ 21. I am preoccupied with more than one client and their family.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

- 22. I am losing sleep over a client and their family's traumatic experiences.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 23. I have thought that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of my clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 24. I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of my clients and their families.



- 25. I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 26. I have felt a sense of hopelessness associated with working with clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 27. I have felt "on edge" about various things and I attribute this to working with certain clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 28. I have wished that I could avoid working with some clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 29. I have been in danger working with some clients and their families.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 30. I have felt that some of my clients and their families dislike me personally.

Items about being a helper and your work environment:



- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 31. I have felt weak, tired, rundown as a result of my work as a helper.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 32. I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 33. I am unsuccessful at separating work from personal life.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



■ 34. I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often

■ 35. I feel I am working more for the money than for personal fulfillment.

1= Rarely/Never
2= At Times
3= Not Sure
4= Often
5= Very Often

- 36. I find it difficult separating my personal life from my work life.

1= Rarely/Never
2= At Times
3= Not Sure
4= Often
5= Very Often

- 37. I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my work.

1= Rarely/Never
2= At Times
3= Not Sure
4= Often
5= Very Often



- 38. I have thoughts that I am a "failure" as a helper

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 39. I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.

- 1= Rarely/Never
- 2= At Times
- 3= Not Sure
- 4= Often
- 5= Very Often



- 40. I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work life.

Before Scoring...

- Compassion Fatigue is NOT "burnout". Burnout is associated with stress and hassles involved in your work; it is very cumulative, is relatively predictable and frequently a vacation or change of job helps a great deal.

- Compassion Fatigue is very different. Compassion Fatigue is a state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of clients as manifested in one or more ways including

- reexperiencing the traumatic event, avoidance/numbing of reminders of the event, and persistent arousal.

- Although similar to critical incident stress (being traumatized by something you actually experience or see), with CF you are absorbing the trauma through the eyes and ears of your clients. It can be thought of as secondary post-traumatic stress.

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

- Make sure you have responded to ALL questions.
- Next, circle the following 23 items: 1-8, 10-13, 17-26 and number 29.
- Now ADD the numbers you wrote next to the items circled.



SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

- Note your risk of Compassion Fatigue
- 26 or LESS = Extremely LOW risk
- 27 to 30 = LOW risk
- 31 to 35 = Moderate risk
- 36 to 40 = HIGH risk
- 41 or more = Extremely HIGH risk

To determine your risk of **Burnout**

- ADD the numbers you wrote next to the items NOT circled.
- 19 or less = Extremely LOW risk
- 20 to 24 = LOW risk
- 25 to 29 = Moderate risk
- 30 to 42 = High risk
- 43 or more = Extremely high risk

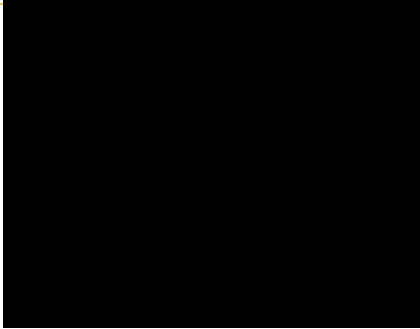
- Copyright 1994, Florida State University Psychosocial Stress Research Program
- This instrument is under development

Next Steps.....

- What can I do about Compassion Fatigue?
- Remember its similarity to Post Traumatic Stress

- Appropriate breaks
- Not one situation too long
- Eating properly
- Rotate through intensity
- Use group supervision
- Understand age-similarity susceptibility
- Don't be surprised at denial

Effects of watching TV?



How does humor help?

- Laughing is a natural Stress Reducer
- Please note if someone stops laughing.

Key unit of Intervention

- The Family (physical and Spiritual)
 - Supportive for recovery
 - Open to the contagious nature of
 - C.F.

What can an employer/ stake holders do?

- Time off
- Financial support
- Debriefing in Critical situations
- Exercise program
- Interactive Mgt
- Accountability Sisters/brothers

Closing comments

Diagram 1: A square frame with a yellow L-shaped line at the top-left corner and a yellow horizontal line near the bottom.

Diagram 1: A set of seven horizontal lines for writing.

Diagram 2: A square frame with a yellow L-shaped line at the top-left corner and a yellow horizontal line near the bottom.

Diagram 2: A set of seven horizontal lines for writing.

Diagram 3: A square frame with a yellow L-shaped line at the top-left corner and a yellow horizontal line near the bottom.

Diagram 3: A set of seven horizontal lines for writing.