

# COMPASSION FATIGUE & BURNOUT: CHALLENGES FOR COLLEGE COUNSELORS TREATING HIGH RISK SUICIDAL CLIENTS

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# Learning Objectives

1

Enhance knowledge on Compassion Fatigue and Burnout and its impact to counselor wellness.

2

➤ Identify signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

3

➤ Increase knowledge on tools to maintain counselor wellness and resilience

# Suicide Statistics in the United States

Based on Statistics from 2019 – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Suicide was the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death overall in the U.S. with 47,500 lives claimed.

Men were 3.54x more likely to die by suicide than women.

White males accounted for approx. 70 % of deaths by suicide.

Suicide is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for ages 15-24.

Suicide 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause among college students:

- Learning basic skills (managing time, interpersonal conflicts, money)
- Shifts in social supports (GBLTQ, international students)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2021), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021),  
National Institute of Mental Health (2021)

# Suicide, Covid-19 & Specialty Groups

- African Americans
- Disaster Survivors
- Loss Survivors
- Health Professionals & First Responders



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2021),  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), National Institute of Mental Health (2021)

# Suicide & Telemental Health

## Challenges:

Body Language

Confidentiality & HIPPA compliant platforms

Collaborators (on campus & community)

Emergency Contact

Safety Plan

Access to resources (contingent on location)

MOU's

Best Practices (APA & APA)

## Considerations:

Practice with the platform and the assessment documents

Protocol (self and inform client)

Develop a back up plan incase technology fails

Record session/use transcript option

Discuss boundaries of confidentiality

What to do if someone walks in (mild)

# Compassion Fatigue & Burnout Defined

Also called *vicarious trauma* or *secondary trauma*. The emotional residue or strain of exposure from working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events.

Whereas *burnout* is a cumulative process marked by emotional exhaustion and withdrawal associated with increased workload and institutional stress, NOT trauma-related.

It differs from burn-out but can co-exist. Compassion Fatigue can occur due to *exposure on one case* or can be due to a *cumulative* level of trauma.

(Figley, 1995)

# Compassion Fatigue & Burnout Defined

Compassion fatigue has a more rapid onset while burnout emerges over time.  
Compassion fatigue has a faster recovery and can be less severe,  
**if** recognized and managed early.

(Figley, 1995)

# Signs & Symptoms



**Psychological**



**Physical**



**Behavioral**



**At Work**



**Cognitive**



# Signs & Symptoms

- Feel anxious or apprehensive
- Get tired easily and frequently
- Argue with others over minor things or have low frustration tolerance
- Be unable to relax
- Feel beset by demands or under pressure
- Experience lack of patience or tolerance towards clients and others
- Feel there is not enough time for yourself, family or friends
- Experience some memory and concentration lapses
- Lack interest in or time to socialize or engage in recreational activities
- Feel irritable
- Experience sleep or appetite disturbances
- Develop a critical or cynical attitude toward work or life
- Get little satisfaction from usually enjoyable activities
- Feel unfulfilled at the end of the workday

“Caregivers who suffer from compassion fatigue may actually justify experiencing the symptoms as part of the act of, or cost of, caring.”

(Oshberg, 2014)





# BRENE BROWN

*Vulnerability*

<https://youtu.be/ZkDaKKkFi6Y>







# Tools for Intervention

# Tools for Intervention

- **Self-Assessment**
- **Social & Professional Support**
- **Self-Care Activities**
- **Leadership**



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# SELF ASSESSMENT



# Refection Questions

- How many numbers hit 100 percent, and which ones were they? Which sectors were they in?
- Which numbers were closest to zero percent, and which sectors were they in?
- What sector do you see most filled? Which one the least filled?
- What were some answers that brought you the most surprise?
- If you had to choose one number in every sector to work on, which ones would they be? From those, which one could you work on in the next week? Two weeks?
- How can you appreciate your 100 percent answers today?
- Did this help in putting your wellness in your life into perspective?

# SMART Goals







# SOCIAL & PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

# Social/Professional Support

- Identify Your Support Care Network
  - (3-5 names with phone numbers)
  - *Sharing trauma narratives*
  - *Empower to Confront*
  - *Telling on Ourselves*
  - *Accountability*



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# SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

# Self-Care Activities

- Regular (3xs/week) Physical Exercise
- Healthy Diet
- Good sleep hygiene
- Regular social activities/Quality Family or Friend time
- Creative activities or hobbies
- Spiritual Practices
- Professional Enrichment
- Maintaining medical/doctor/dentist visits
- Periodic Supervision, Consultation, & Debriefing
- Somatic Exercises

- <https://youtu.be/DsazLj6pt4E>





# LEADERSHIP

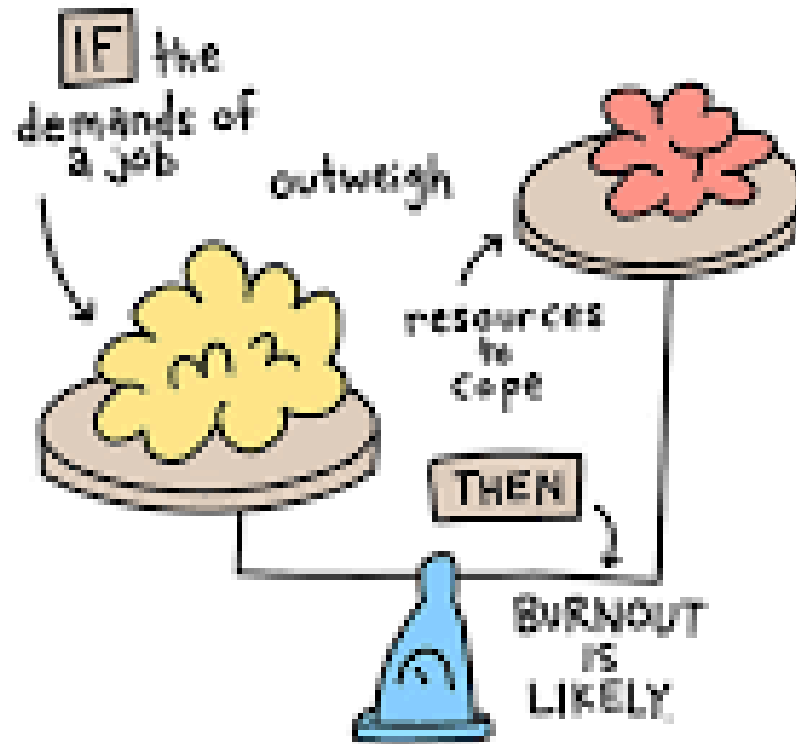
# Leadership Activities

## **Power & *Empowerment*:**

- *Voice*: having voice, feeling heard, action taken based on someone's speaking up/out
- *Autonomy*: ability to work and make decisions, independently
- *Flexibility*: work arranged around needs of worker
- *Altruistic work*: task/work is intrinsically rewarding and positive through one's ability to affect change in the lives of others

## ***Safety-security*:**

- *Climate*: working environment positive, open, honest-feeling,
- relaxed, psychological feeling of the workplace
- *Supervisor/mentor*: Provide guidance or feedback from authority figure
- *Resources*: materials, time, help needed for work provided; good compensation; working conditions provide sense of security & stability
- *Triumph*: victory over negative harmful experiences, especially when these threatened feelings of security/safety



STRESS DOESN'T  
CAUSE BURNOUT

Stress + inadequate support resources does.

THOUGHTS

“ A GOAL  
WITHOUT  
A PLAN  
IS JUST  
A WISH ”

*Ben*

CALL TO  
ACTION





QUESTIONS???

# Additional Resources

## Professional quality of life information, including compassion fatigue/burnout

- [www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org)

## Princeton Umatter Wellness Wheel Plan Development

- <https://umatter.princeton.edu/action-matters/caring-yourself/wellness-wheel-assessment>

## Wellness Wheel Information

- <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/finding-balance-going-through-it/>

## Resiliency Self-Quiz

- <https://www.resiliencyquiz.com/index.shtml>

## Self-care quiz, articles

- [www.myselfcare.org](http://www.myselfcare.org)

## Information for caregivers

- [www.compassionfatigue.org](http://www.compassionfatigue.org)

## Information and articles for post-traumatic stress syndrome survivors and their caregivers

- [www.giftfromwithin.org](http://www.giftfromwithin.org)

## BOOKS

- *How Can I Help? Stories and Reflections on Service*, by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman (Knopf, 1985) 256 pages, \$12
- *The Truth about Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It*, Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter (Jossey-Bass, 1997) 200 pages, \$25



# Presenter's Contact Information



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