

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Fatigue occurs during a time of intense prolonged crisis in which the "caregiver" does not have enough time and resources to recharge their ability to be compassionate toward others. Here, in a snap shot, are items to be aware of around this issue.



EMPATHETIC ZONE

- We all have that zone in which we are centered, calm, and experience some alignment between our inner balance and the external pressures we encounter.
- From this zone comes our ability to empathize with others.
- When we encounter instances of severe or prolonged stress we are pushed beyond the limits of our empathetic capacity and begin to be drained of our ability to empathize - this is compassion fatigue.

SYMPTOMS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced ability to sympathize/empathize
- Irregular anger and irritability
- Increase in addictive behavior
- Dread of working with certain individuals or a group of individuals
- Diminished joy of ministry
- Heightened anxiety
- Disruption of worldview
- Hypersensitivity to critique
- Insensitivity toward others
- Difficulty separating professional and personal time
- Impaired ability to make decisions/feelings of being overwhelmed
- Problems with intimacy and personal relationships

ADDRESSING COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Recognize how the symptoms might be clustering in you.
- Access internal ability to widen zone.
- Prayer
- Music
- Scripture
- Meditation
- Avoid negativity/stay away from negative people.
- Set boundaries, say "no," don't overextend yourself.
- Reframe your feelings: "I can't do that" to "I have the skill and patience to be helpful for the next hour."
- Stay connected with peers and colleagues.
- Complete concrete tasks.