The Paradox of Compassion

Compassion fatigue and self care

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Objectives for: Mindfulness and Compassion Fatigue

- Identify the symptoms of compassion fatigue.
- Define what mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR).
- Apply MBSR to self-care.
- Participants will examine the need for assessment of compassion fatigue.
- Suggest ways to implement mindfulness in the work and training settings.
Befriending suffering

“The seeds of wisdom, peace, and wholeness are within each of our difficulties” (Kornfield, 1993, p. 80)
Compassion

Definition of COMPASSION:

- sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it.

(Webster Dictionary)
Mindfulness

- Vehicle for learning compassion. Fully engaging.
- Shifts one’s relationship towards suffering.
- Compassion to self encompasses the relationship to the other.
- Equanimity: living in the context of suffering - Accepting suffering will be a part of life.
Long Term work with trauma

- Compassion satisfaction
- Compassion fatigue
- Burnout
Vocabulary

• Compassion Satisfaction
  – Positive aspects of working as a helper
• Compassion Fatigue
  – Negative aspects of working as a helper
• Burnout
  – Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed
• Work-related traumatic stress
  – Primary traumatic stress direct target of event
  – Secondary traumatic exposure to event due to a relationship with the primary person
Research:

- **Stress** may lead to burn out

  - MBSR to increase job satisfaction, decrease depression and decrease *psychological distress*. (Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, Cordova, 2005)
  - Nurses - 48 studies in meta analysis- stress and organizational commitment strongly associated with satisfaction (Blegen, 1993).
  - 2009 Austin et al. Compassion Fatigue study: running on empty...

Professional Quality of Life

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout
- Secondary Trauma
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

- If you would like, take a minute to assess where you are at with this tool.
- This tool has three subscales: Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout.

Manual is at website:

www.ProQOL.org
Compassion Fatigue

Who?

Prevalence?

"I could really get ahead at my two jobs if it weren't for that 5 letter vice I crave... S-L-E-E-P."
Compassion Fatigue

Risk Factors
- Overwhelming exhaustion
- Feelings of Depersonalization
- Sense of lack of personal accomplishment

Other Risk Factors
- Younger persons
- Gender
- Lack of supervision or support
Compassion Fatigue

Balance is lost between empathy and objectivity.
Symptoms of compassion fatigue

- Suffer from symptoms of PTSD.
- Emotional overextension may include: Physical, Behavioral, Emotional, Spiritual symptoms
Oncoology Nurse Study

- 231 nurses – 103 responded.
- Lag time with EAP only 12 participants used
- 5% support groups
- 18% no professional support
- 45% no skills for self care
Case Examples
Sharing
Risk Factors

- Female
- Occupational stress
- Your own trauma history
  - Length of time treating clients with trauma (less time more compassion fatigue).
  - Evidence for professional risk remains inconsistent.
Re-balance
Mindful Awareness
What Do You Do With Your Mind?
Definition: “Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” (Kabat Zinn, J., 1994, p. 4).

- Mindfulness is not a religious or scientific belief. It is not staring at your navel and tuning out to reality.

- Mindfulness is a process of self-awareness, self-inquiry and mindful action.
What Skills of Mindfulness

- Observe - Just step back, but not push away. Experience whatever it is that is happening.
- Describe event of listening mindlessly vs. feeling heard mindfully / Car example
- Meditation is about experiencing and letting go.
Mindfulness
Mindful Movement
Healthy Care Giving

- Breathe deeply as often as possible
- Sustain your own compassion
- Learn to let go
- Share the load with others
- Self –acceptance
- Embrace the not knowing
Loving Kindness

- Defined: Flourishing of mindfulness- good will towards yourself and others
- Prepare for the intention of kindness
- Do sit with Love after Love , Derek Walcott (1976).
- Use of phases of loving kindness
Mind Body Connection

Reflection and Questions