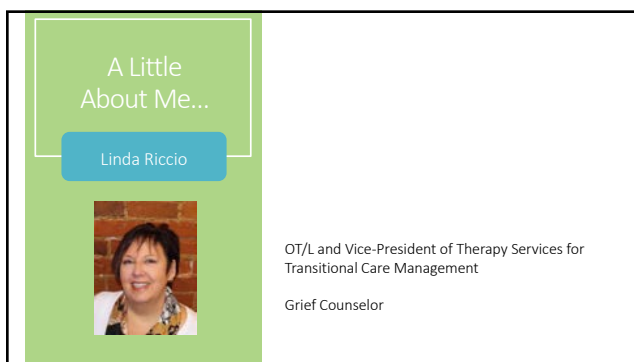




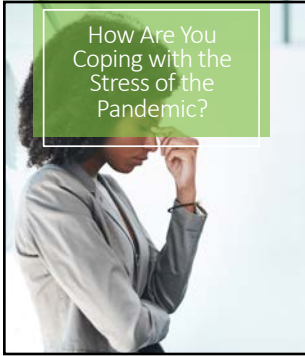
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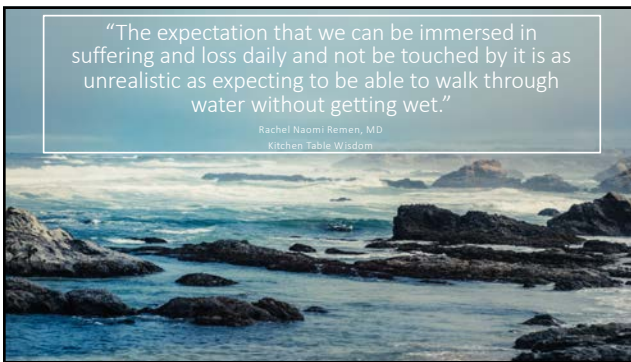
3



How Are You Coping with the Stress of the Pandemic?

- intense and chaotic times complicated by grief
- grief can be about a person, or about the situation
- un-recognized grief won't go away
- grief is disruptive in your life
- consequences of suppressing grief
- grief "ambushes"
- pressure to be "normal"
- we are all experiencing "a new normal"
- unknown recovery period → chronic stress


4



"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet."

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD
Kitchen Table Wisdom

5



Symptoms of Grief

Physical

- Fatigue
- Change of Appetite
- Headaches
- Aches & Pain
- Stomach Aches
- Heart Palpitations

Emotional

- Sadness
- Depression
- Inability to Sleep
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Suicidal Thoughts

© The Emotional PPE Project

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Grief Complications

- "I can't find my keys."
- "I forgot about my daughter's soccer game."
- "I just can't get it together lately."
- "I'm overwhelmed."
- not being able to concentrate
- brain fog
- change in sleep patterns
- low frustration tolerance
- physical problems
- holding onto stuff is like "clogging a major artery"


7

Thriving "I got this."	Surviving "Something isn't right."	Struggling "I can't keep this up."	In Crisis "I can't survive this."
Calm and steady with minor mood fluctuations Able to take things in stride Consistent performance Able to take feedback and to adjust to changes of plans Able to focus Able to communicate effectively Normal sleep patterns and appetite	Nervousness, sadness, increased mood fluctuations Inconsistent performance More easily overwhelmed or irritated Increased need for control and difficulty adjusting to changes Trouble sleeping or eating Activities and relationships you used to enjoy seem less interesting or even stressful Muscle tension, low energy, headaches	Persistent fear, panic, anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness Exhaustion Poor performance and difficulty making decisions or concentrating Avoiding interaction with coworkers, family, and friends Fatigue, aches and pain Restless, disturbed sleep Self-medicating with substances, food, or other numbing activities	Doubting abilities and loss of function Panic attacks Nightmares or flashbacks Unable to fall or stay asleep Invasive thoughts Thoughts of self-harm or suicide Easily enraged or aggressive Careless mistakes or inability to focus Feeling numb, lost, or out of control Withdrawal from relationships Dependence on substances, food, or other numbing activities to cope

Adapted from: Wilson, P., Ross, B., Taylor, N., Anderson, L., Lewis, J., Smith, R., Vinograd, D., Webb, D.P., Stangor, R., & Wu, B. (2015). Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Services Personnel. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

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Processing Grief



- don't suppress your emotions
- honestly express your feelings
- "lean into it"
- "in order to be strong, you have to be weak" → "you have to feel to heal"
- letting go of "having it all together"
- don't rush
- setting aside your pain / grief to accomplish certain tasks – however. . . .
- your greatest strength can be your greatest weakness

9


PTSD

- PTSD is real
- our brain is "re-wired" as a result of processing trauma
- delays processing grief
- flashbacks or "in a fog"
- fear about feeling safe
- may "over-respond" to some situations or be "hypervigilant"
- avoidance or "leaning into it"
- "How long does this last?"
- Secondary trauma

10

"I do think that part of the battle is recognizing that health care workers may be less comfortable seeking care. Even if we're more educated about mental health, we're not immune to worrying about stigma and what our colleagues will think about us."

Dr. Jessi Gold
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Washington University




11

Mental Health and Covid 19

Since January 2019, adults experiencing symptoms of anxiety have **increased by 30%**

Adults have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder during the pandemic


4 in 10



- The Emotional PPE Project

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When Other People Don't Understand



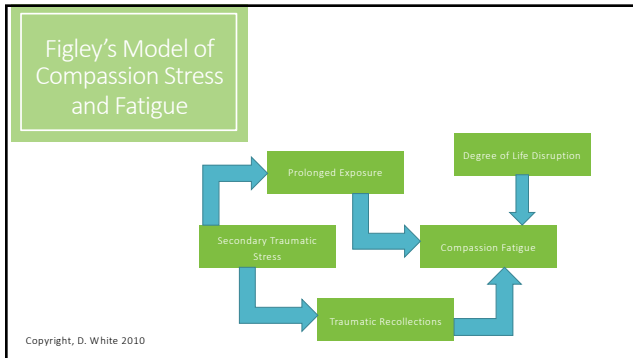
Strategies to respond

- responding to an ambush / grief effects
- people respond to stress / grief differently

- explaining to others
- “thank you”
- “this is my healing process”

- “the new normal” – What is this teaching you in your life?

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14

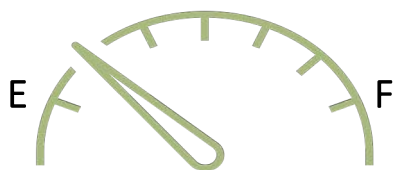
Common Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- Chronic exhaustion (emotional, physical, or both)
- Reduced feelings of sympathy or empathy
- Dreading working for or taking care of another and feeling guilty as a result
- Feelings of irritability, anger, or anxiety
- Depersonalization
- Hypersensitivity or complete insensitivity to emotional material
- Feelings of inequity toward the therapeutic relationship
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Weight loss
- Impaired decision-making
- Problems in personal relationships
- Poor work-life balance
- Diminished sense of career fulfillment

<https://www.goodtherapy.org>

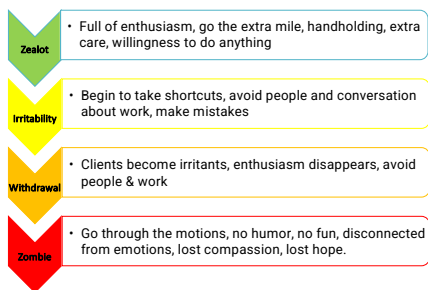
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COMPASSION FATIGUE?



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Compassion Fatigue Trajectory



17

Common Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- <https://www.compassionfatigue.org/>
- Don't make huge life changes right now
- Revisit your passion



18

“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.”

—Jack Kornfield

PRACTICE, AUTHENTIC, SUSTAINABLE SELF-CARE

ASK FOR HELP/REACH OUT TO OTHERS

STRENGTHEN YOUR RESILIENCY

- Resilience is our ability to bounce back from stress. Resilience is a skill that can be learned and cultivated.

USE POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENT WORKPLACE STRATEGIES

- Open discussions about compassion fatigue in the workplace
- Regular breaks
- Routine check-ins
- Mental health days
- Relaxation rooms, massage, meditation classes, etc.

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10 Things to do Each Day

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Vary the work that you do.
4. Do some light exercise.
5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Focus on what you did well.
7. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Share a private joke.
9. Pray, meditate, or relax.
10. Support a colleague.

www.itsbs.org www.nronol.org
www.compassionfatigue.org

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Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Leadership Institute's Self-Care Assessment. Transforming the role of a leader into a sustainable leadership practice.

This document provides the questions and options for self-assessment. Read the questions, mark the responses, and then use the results to guide your self-care plan.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Do you score well in some areas and not so well in others? Do you score well in some areas but not so well in others? Do you score well in some areas but not so well in others? Do you score well in some areas but not so well in others?

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

1 = I do not do this at all

2 = I do not do this often

3 = I do this sometimes

4 = I do this often

5 = I do this every day

6 = I do this every day

7 = I do this every day

8 = I do this every day

9 = I do this every day

10 = I do this every day

11 = I do this every day

12 = I do this every day

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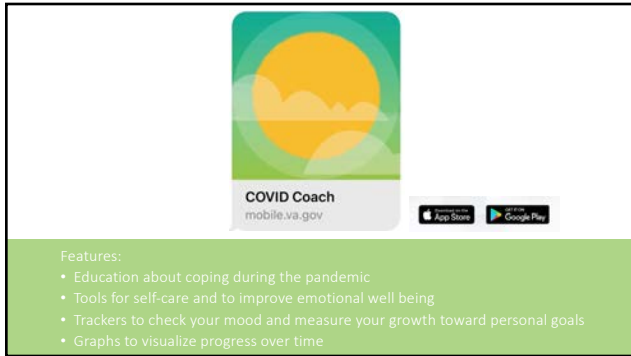
57 = I do this every day

58 = I do this every day

59 = I do this every day

60 = I do this every day

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COVID Coach
mobile.va.gov

Available on the App Store and Google Play.

Features:

- Education about coping during the pandemic
- Tools for self-care and to improve emotional well being
- Trackers to check your mood and measure your growth toward personal goals
- Graphs to visualize progress over time.

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The toll of the pandemic cannot be understated. Many people are dealing with stressors like trauma, stress, anxiety, and grief. Get extra support today by visiting emotionalppe.org

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TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

"Accepting the presence of compassion fatigue in your life only serves to validate the fact that you are a deeply caring individual.

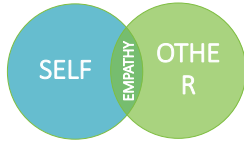
Somewhere along your healing path the truth will present itself. You don't have to make a choice. It is possible to practice healthy, ongoing self-care while successfully caring for others."

Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project www.compassionfatigue.org

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Focusing your Empathy

Your empathy for others helps you do your job. It is important to take good care of your feelings and thought by monitoring how you use them. The most resilient workers are those that know how to turn their feelings into work mode when they go on duty, but off-work mode when they go off duty. This is an effective coping strategy, a way to get maximum protection while working and maximum support while resting.



- ✓ Make this a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
- ✓ Use images that make you feel safe and protected in work mode and connected and cared for in non-work mode to help you switch.
- ✓ Develop rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.
- ✓ Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.

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