

COMPASSION FATIGUE

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION



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Session Agenda

- Compassion Fatigue – defined & symptoms
- The Four Phases
- Compassion Satisfaction – the anti-fatigue
- ABC's of Self Care
- Resources

Who has heard of Compassion Fatigue?

What is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for traumatized animals. Compassion fatigue is a secondary traumatic stress syndrome.

-Dr. Charles Figley Professor, Tulane University Director, Tulane Traumatology Institute

Compassion fatigue is a set of symptoms, not a disease.



What is Compassion Fatigue?



Primary Trauma – you are in harms way or danger; grief



Secondary Trauma – bearing witness to the suffering of others; listening to stories; seeing evidence, pictures, videos; caring for abused; comforting the grieving



Vicarious Trauma – shifts our world view, as a result of secondary trauma

Who is affected by Compassion Fatigue?

Behavior Specialist
Animal Care Tech
Field Rescue Officer
CEO
Euthanasia Tech
Cruelty Investigator
Humane Educator
Dog Walker
Advocates
Intake Tech
Clinic Staff
Administration
Manager
Vet Assistant
Adoption Counselor
Volunteer
Foster Parent

Everyone can be.
It's the Cost of Caring...

Who is affected by Compassion Fatigue?

It helps when we all practice...

...but those most at risk are

- directly involved in euthanasia
- first responders to cruelty
- caregivers to our most at risk animals

Empathy

be aware,
understand
& identify
with
another's
feelings &
experiences

Compassion

be kind,
caring &
thoughtful

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

Physical

Behavioral

Psychological

Headaches
Difficulty Concentrating
Emotional Exhaustion
Bottled Up Emotions
Excessive complaints
Frequent or persistent illness /health issues
Anger/Irritability
Hypervigilance
Alcohol/Substance abuse
Sadness/
Apathy
Exaggerated Sense of Responsibility
Helpless/
Hopeless
Disruption of World View
Frequently late
Exhausted
Isolation/Avoidance
Cynical
Difficulty sleeping
Recurring nightmares or flashbacks
Resentment
Lack of self-care

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Which compassion fatigue symptoms do you or have you recognized in your own life?

Contributing Factors



The Four Phases* By Doug Fakkema

ONE – “The Honeymoon” - Red hot and raring to go, we are out to change the world

TWO – “Depression” - The bubble bursts and we crash

THREE – “Anger” - Depression turns outward and we’re mad as hell

FOUR – “Resilience” - New determination and understanding of the real mission

*Attachment in your handouts



The “Anti-Fatigue”

What is Compassion Satisfaction?

Compassion Satisfaction is the pleasure we derive from being able to do our work well. High levels of Compassion Satisfaction are related to our ability to be effective caregivers.

- Dr. Beth Hudnall Stamm

The best way to lessen Compassion Fatigue symptoms is to raise Compassion Satisfaction levels.



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Why did you choose this work?

What do you enjoy most about
your work?

Why is it meaningful to you?

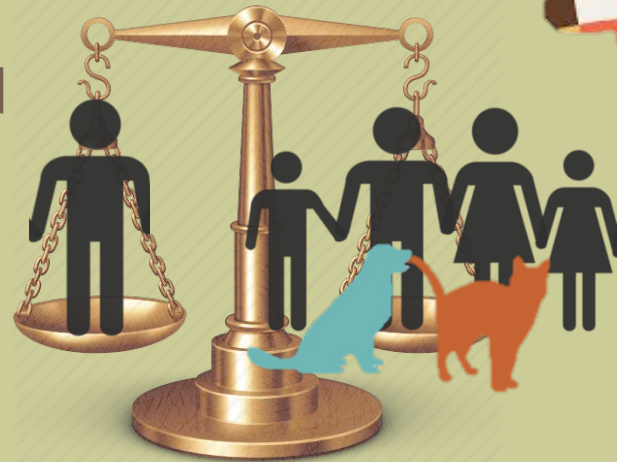
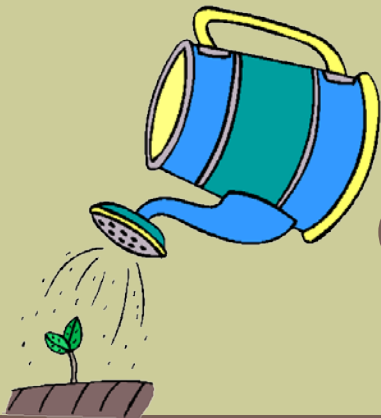
Who has heard of Self-Care? What is it?

ABC's of Self-Care

Compassion
Fatigue

Awareness – learning about symptoms, learning about yourself, tuning into your triggers and individual responses

Balance – caring for others and caring for ourselves; finding and knowing our boundaries



Connection – maintaining and investing in relationships; finding the positives

It's Personal – Self-Assessments

Self-Assessments are a good tool.
Know where you are and regularly
assess yourself.

ProQOL* – Professional Quality of Life
Self-Test by Dr. Beth Hudnall
Stamm

MySelfCare.org* - Dennis Portnoy

Life Stress Test* - Dr. Tim Lowenstein,
StressMarket.com

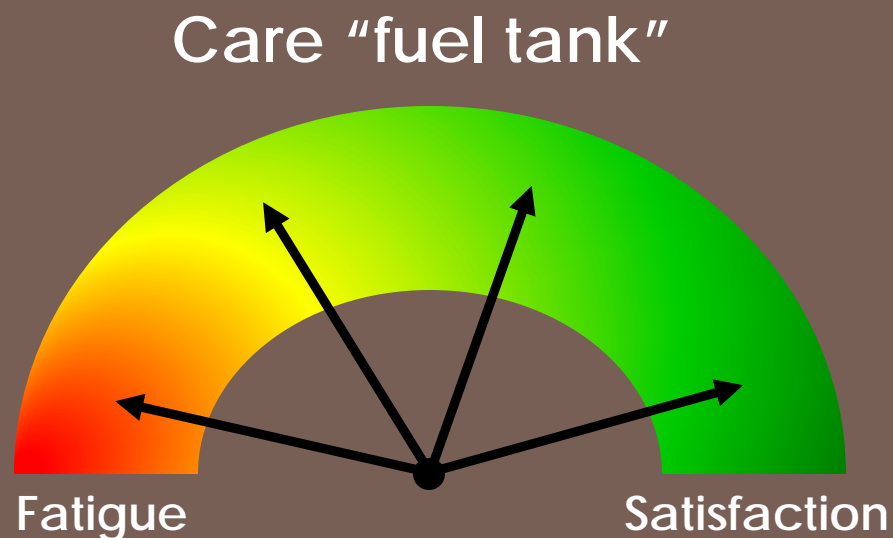
*Attachment in your handouts



It's Personal – Self-Care

Self-Care is crucial,
and it takes a plan.

- ✓ Identify authentic, sustainable practices for yourself.
- ✓ Not optional!



It is tough to provide
care on an empty tank.
Self-Care fills your tank!

Self-Care Plan Ideas

At "Work"

Physical Care

Emotional Coping

Whatever gives you JOY!

Stress Release

Stay Hydrated – drink WATER

Sports

Pray

Set Boundaries

Get Back Up/Help

Take a Break

Baking

Eat Well

Write – express your feelings

Draw

Paint

Deep Breathe

Home Projects

Meditate

Exercise

Laugh

Go for a Walk

Go Kayaking

Stretch

Read

Cry

Self-Talk

Gratitude List

PLAY with Kids, Pets

Self-Care Assessment & Plan

Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

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

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- ☐ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- ☐ Eat healthily
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Get regular medical care for prevention
- ☐ Get medical care when needed
- ☐ Take time off when sick

's Self-Care Plan!

MIND	BODY
SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE	I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH
SPIRIT	

Take-Aways & Next Steps

- Self-Care Goal – make it SMART!
- Self assessments
- Other ...

Resources

- Volunteer Resource Page
- PetSmart Charities – webinar series & articles
- Petfinder.com
- Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project
- Pet Loss Support – HSHV & Blue Dog Counseling

The Starfish Story

An old man was walking along the beach when he noticed a young woman off in the distance. As he got closer, he noticed that the woman was collecting starfish that had washed up on the beach and tossing them, one by one, back into the ocean. "Excuse me, young lady, but what are you doing?" the old man asked.

"All these starfish have been washed up by the tide. If I don't throw them back, they will die," she replied.

"But there are hundreds and hundreds of starfish on the beach," the old man said. "You can't possibly make a difference."

The young woman listened politely, bent down, picked up another starfish, and tossed it into the ocean. She looked at the old man and replied, "It made a difference for that one."

Adapted from "The Star Thrower," by Loren Eisely