





Self-Care to Prevent Compassion Fatigue

Presented by Military & Family Life Consultants





Objectives

- » Recognize the signs
- » Learn to cope
- » Know when to call for help




★ 2 ★




Definitions

- » The cumulative impact of hearing about, caring for, and helping to alleviate the suffering and misfortune of others.
- » Characterized by feeling:
 - Trapped
 - Overwhelmed
 - Out of control




★ 3 ★




Vulnerability

- » People who are very empathic
- » People with unresolved personal traumas
- » People going through the same thing




★ 4 ★




Recognizing the Signs

- » Emotional and Physical
- » Thoughts and Attitudes
- » Social and Behavioral




★ 5 ★



Emotional

- » Rapid changes in mood
- » Nervousness, Suspiciousness, Hyper-vigilance
- » Worrying about your own safety
- » Irritability, Agitation, Anger
- » Insomnia and Nightmares



★ 6 ★

Physical

- » Headaches or Stomach aches
- » Racing or Pounding Heart,
- » Shortness of Breath,
- » Dizziness or Shaking
- » Fatigue
- » Body aches and pains

★ 7 ★

Thoughts & Attitudes

- » Distractibility
- » Confusion and Indecision
- » Forgetfulness
- » Self-doubt or blame
- » Lack of confidence
- » Lowered self-esteem

★ 8 ★

Social Behavior

- » Isolation and withdrawal
- » Angry Outbursts displaced onto “innocent bystanders.”
- » Feeling jaded, cynical, or callous and suspicious toward others.



★ 9 ★

Coping Strategies

- » Emotional and physical
- » Thoughts and attitudes
- » Social and behavioral

★ 10 ★

Emotional

- » Feel what you feel – Bottled up feelings come out in negative ways.
- » Watch emotionally powerful movies.
- » Keep your sense of humor.
- » Keep a journal or scrapbook.
- » Limit resentment, sadness, and grief
- » Increase acceptance, resolve, and hope.

★ 11 ★

Thoughts & Attitudes

- » Conserve your energy.
 - Deployment is a marathon not a sprint.
- » Take care of yourself.
 - Put the O2 mask on yourself first.
 - Getting in the water with a drowning person is a last resort.
- » Think long term.
 - Success is a journey not a goal.

★ 12 ★


Thoughts & Attitudes

- » Set boundaries
 - Know your role
 - Know your limitations
 - Know when to say “No.”
- » Work to Empower Others
- » Under promise and Over deliver
- » Enjoy the moment
- » Give yourself credit
- » Don’t compare your self to others
- » Do your best not THE BEST

★ 13 ★

Social & Behavioral

- » Seek balance in your life
- » Have a “battle buddy”
- » Accept help and support
- » Limit your exposure to news coverage
- » Have some personal goals or projects
- » Participate in recreational activities
- » Spend time with friends



★ 14 ★

Physical

Healthy Behaviors

- » Nutrition
 - » 3 meals a day
 - » Limit snacking and alcohol
- » Sleep –
 - » Develop a relaxing routine
 - » Go to bed and get up at the same time every day
 - » Don’t stay in bed to toss and turn.
- » Exercise - 20 – 30 minutes 3 -4 days per week.
- » Relaxation - unclench your mind and body

★ 15 ★

When to Seek Help

- » The signs of compassion fatigue persist and are interfering with your ability to function
- » Usual coping methods don’t work
- » You are having thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else


★ 16 ★

Summary

- » Compassion fatigue is the cumulative effect of caring for and helping to alleviate the suffering of others
- » Compassion fatigue can effect you emotionally and physically
- » Learning to recognize the signs is important in managing compassion fatigue
- » Developing coping strategies can help
- » Seek help if the symptoms of compassion fatigue persist

★ 17 ★

Questions



★ 18 ★



Resources

- » Military Community Services
- » Chaplain and Local Clergy
- » Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- » TRICARE www.tricare.osd.mil
- » Behavioral Health Services

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