



Workshops for the Helping Professions Compassion Fatigue Solutions & Professional Development

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Transforming Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma: Creative Tools for Developing Resiliency

Workshop Description:

Compassion fatigue is characterized by deep emotional and physical exhaustion and by a shift in a helping professional's sense of hope and optimism about the future and the value of their work. It has been called "a disorder that affects those who do their work well" (Figley 1995). The level of compassion fatigue a helper experiences can ebb and flow from one day to the next, and even very healthy helpers with optimal life/work balance and self care strategies can experience a higher than normal level of compassion fatigue when they are overloaded, are working with a lot of traumatic content, or find their case load suddenly heavy with clients who are all chronically in crisis.

Compassion fatigue is a normal consequence of working in the helping field. The best strategy to address compassion fatigue is to develop excellent self care strategies, as well as an early warning system that lets the helper know that they are moving into the caution zone of compassion fatigue.

This is a highly interactive one day workshop, incorporating a combination of solo, small group and whole group activities. Topics covered will include:

- Understanding compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma and related concepts
- Symptom checklist, targeting areas for strategic planning
- Evaluating self-care, identifying triggers/vulnerabilities
- Developing a personalized strategic plan for identifying and treating compassion fatigue

Past participants have reported feeling inspired to make meaningful changes in their personal, professional and organizational lives in addition to learning practical strategies for identifying and dealing with the costs of caring.

Diana Tikasz MSW RSW

Diana has been committed to trauma-focused work in the health care sector for the past 22 years. She has worked in emergency department crisis teams, coordinated hospital based sexual assault/domestic violence treatment programs, which involved assisting individuals experiencing a current crisis, counselling those who have been traumatized by violence, and teaching other professionals how to do this work effectively while staying healthy themselves. Diana has also worked in various Employee Assistance Programs where she has specialized in working with individuals who are feeling stressed by their personal and/or work life. Her passion is to assist people in creating personal, professional, and organizational changes that promote optimal health and make us more effective helpers. Hence, over the past 5 years, Diana has devoted time to providing numerous workshops to various helping professionals in the area of compassion fatigue/vicarious trauma and self-care because a helper's compassion is not complete if it does not include compassion for oneself.