HISTORY OF COMPASSION FATIGUE
“THAT WHICH IS TO GIVE LIGHT MUST ENDURE BURNING”

-VIKTOR FRANKL
QUESTION:

• THINK OF 2 OR 3 WAYS THAT YOUR ROLE AS HELPER HAS AFFECTED YOU
• HOW HAS YOUR VIEW OF THE WORLD BEEN CHANGED?
• WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO ADDRESS / ADMIT THIS?
WHERE DID THIS IDEA COME FROM?

HIPPOCRATES: FATHER OF MEDICINE

HIPPOCRATIC OATH:

“I WILL COMPORT (BEHAVE) MYSELF AND USE MY KNOWLEDGE IN A GODLY MANNER
I MUST BE OBJECTIVE, STAND-OFFISH, AND STOIC”
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS VS. SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

PTSD

• A condition that is triggered by a terrifying event – either experiencing it or witnessing it.

STSD

• The emotional duress that results from hearing about the firsthand trauma experienced by another.
## SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS SYMPTOMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AROUSAL</th>
<th>AVOIDANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>• Procrastination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obsessive Thoughts</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sleep Problems</td>
<td>• Self RX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Irritability/Easily Angered</td>
<td>• Relational Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impulsive</td>
<td>• Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dis-Ease</td>
<td>• Blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compulsive Behavior</td>
<td>• Dread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor Concentration</td>
<td>• Hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weight +/-</td>
<td>• Constriction/Entitlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STSD → BURNOUT

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

• “STATE OF FATIGUE OR FRUSTRATION BROUGHT ABOUT BY DEVOTION TO A CAUSE THAT FAILED TO BRING ABOUT EXPECTED REWARD” HERBERT FREUDENBERGER (1974)

• “A PSYCHOLOGICAL SYNDROME OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, DEPERSONALIZATION (BECOMING ROBOTIC), AND REDUCED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.” CHRISTINE MASLACH (1986)
ACKNOWLEDGING THAT YOU ARE STRUGGLING IS THE FIRST STEP IN CARING FOR ONESELF

“BY THE TIME YOU’RE THIRSTY, YOU ARE ALREADY DEHYDRATED”
OBSERVE THE WORK THAT YOU DO.... DOES IT HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

• A LARGE VOLUME OF DEMAND: MORE CLIENTS/MORE PAPERWORK/ETC.
• CONTINUALLY DWINDLING RESOURCES
• EXPOSURE TO DIFFICULT STORIES: LOSS/PAIN/DEATH/SUFFERING
• CLIENTS WHO FACE SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES/CHRONIC NEEDS
SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE
STS + BURNOUT = COMPASSION FATIGUE

SYMPTOMS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Anxiety / Fear
- Anger
- Loss of Meaning/Purpose
- Relationship Problems
- Somatic Complaints
- Suicidal Ideation
- Reactivity
- Racing Thoughts
- Cynicism
- Hating Work

- Sleep Problems
- Isolation
- Self RX (Alcohol/Drugs/Sex/etc)
- Loss of Productivity
- GI Distress
- Poor Concentration
- Frequent Complaining
- Dread
- Passive Aggression
- Absenteeism

- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Co-Worker Issues
- Nightmares
- Escape Fantasies
- Loss of Enjoyment
- Sadness/Depression
- Sarcasm
- Violent Fantasies
- Weight +/-
WHAT DOESN’T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER? -NIETZSCHE

IN REALITY:

THE MORE UNTREATED (UNADDRESSED) OUR TRAUMA IS, THE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE WE ARE TO BURNOUT

HEALED/INTEGRATED TRAUMA = STRONGER

UNTREATED/DISINTEGRATED TRAUMA = WEAKER

WHAT DOESN’T KILL YOU CAN LEAVE YOU IN A PARAPLEGIC STATE
TRUE OR FALSE

WE ARE 100% SAFE RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW?
WE LIVE IN THE SAFEST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

GETTYSBURG: 53,000 DEATHS

JAPAN TSUNAMI: 15,000 DEATHS
WHAT IS PERCEIVED THREAT?

• THIS FACTOR REFLECTS EMOTIONAL OR COGNITIVE APPRAISALS OF SITUATIONS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT ACCURATELY REPRESENT OBJECTIVE OR FACTUAL REALITY.

-PTSD.VA.GOV
PERCEIVED THREAT

INCREASED:
HEART RATE
BREATHING RATE
MUSCLE TENSION
ENERGY
DIS-EASE
MENTAL FUNCTIONING
OBSESSION/COMPULSION

DECREASED:
BREATHING VOLUME
NEO-CORTICAL FUNCTIONING
FRONTAL LOBE ACTIVITY
MOTOR CONTROL
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING
STRENGTH
SPEED & AGILITY

FIGHT, FLIGHT, OR FREEZE
REAL DEMAND VS. PERCEIVED DEMAND?

- HOW DO MY BIASES DEFINE MY PERSPECTIVE?
- CAN MY FEARS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF OTHERS CREATE THREATS WHERE THEY DON’T EXIST?
- CREATE AWARENESS OF MY OWN PERSPECTIVE AND THE THREATS THAT I AM CREATING ALL AROUND ME.
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE

• WWW.PROQOL.ORG

• SELF-SCORING SECTION
RESILIENCY SKILLS

5 WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE AGAINST COMPASSION FATIGUE
WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

• ACCORDING TO DIANE COUTU AUTHOR OF HOW RESILIENCE WORKS; RESILIENT PEOPLE POSSESS THREE CHARACTERISTICS:
  • A STAUNCH ACCEPTANCE OF REALITY
  • A DEEP BELIEF THAT LIFE IS MEANINGFUL
  • THE ABILITY TO IMPROVISE
RESILIENCY
SKILL #1

SELF REGULATION
PARASYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE
(REST & DIGEST)

VS.
SYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE
(FIGHT, FLIGHT, OR FREEZE)

• HOW DO WE SELF REGULATE?
  RELAX!!!

VAGUS NERVE: ORIGINATES IN THE BRAINSTEM AND EXTENDS
ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE TONGUE, VOCAL CHORDS,
HEART, LUNGS, AND OTHER INTERNAL ORGANS

• DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING
• PELVIC RELAXATION
• FACE IMMERSION IN COLD WATER
• TONGUE IMMERSION IN WATER/SALIVA

PARASYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE
(REST & DIGEST)

VS.
SYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE
(FIGHT, FLIGHT, OR FREEZE)
WHAT IS THE RIGHT ACTION WHEN YOU PERCEIVE THREAT BUT ARE IN ZERO REAL DANGER?
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON’T RELAX?

• I BECOME UNABLE TO RID MY LIFE OF PERCEIVED THREATS
• I BECOME A VICTIM OF MY OWN LIFE
• MY WORLD BECOMES SMALLER & SMALLER
• NOTHING IS SAFE
• ADRENALINE INTOXICATION
RELAXATION VS. SELF REGULATION

• RELAXATION
  • STOP
  • BREATHE
  • MEDITATE
  • MOMENT OF SILENCE

• SELF REGULATION
  • RELAX BODY
  • COME BACK TO THE PRESENT
  • RELAX BODY
  • COME BACK TO THE PRESENT
  • REPEAT
RESILIENCY
SKILL #2

INTENTIONALITY
I GO WHERE I AIM

• DEFINE THE NUMBER ONE VALUE THAT IS THE COMPASS FOR HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE

• ARTICULATE YOUR PURPOSE FOR BEING ON THIS PLANET VIA A COVENANT OR A MISSION STATEMENT
HE WHO HAS THE WHY TO LIVE CAN BEAR WITH ALMOST ANY HOW

_NIETZSCHE_
RESILIENCY
SKILL #3

PERCEPTUAL MATURATION

I CHOOSE TO BE OF SERVICE

• DEMANDS VS. CHOICE
• OUTCOME DRIVEN VS. PRINCIPLE DRIVEN
• RELINQUISHING ENTITLEMENT
• MAINTAINING INTEGRITY
• SELF-VALIDATION
DEMANDS VS. CHOICE

• AS SOON AS WE PERCEIVE DEMAND WE WILL DO THE FOLLOWING:
  1. THE DEMAND WILL FEEL LIKE A THREAT
  2. BEGIN TO FEEL DREAD/AVOIDANCE
  3. WILL FORCE OUR WAY THROUGH THE DREADED SITUATION

  CHOOSING TO DO THE TASK IS LESS STRESSFUL THAN “HAVE TO’S”
OUTCOME DRIVEN VS. PRINCIPLE DRIVEN

• YOUR PERSONAL WORTH IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE OUTCOME OF YOUR WORK
• DO YOUR BEST AND LET GO OF THE REST
• YOU CAN ONLY DO WHAT YOU CAN DO … MAINTAIN FIDELITY TO YOUR CORE VALUE
RELINQUISHING ENTITLEMENT

• Let go of the belief that you are owed something for your “sacrifice” at work
  • No one is a victim of their work
    • You chose this position
    • You trained for this position
    • You competed to get this position
MAINTAINING INTEGRITY:
OUR SYSTEM IS A VAMPIRE

• The system is designed to take as much from us as we can give
  • Systems are anxious and ungrateful for what we do
  • What to do?

1. Advocate for ourselves: It’s okay to say “no”
2. Self-regulate in these anxious/high-demand settings

One commonality in those who experience burnout/CF is habitual breaching personal integrity in the workplace.
SELF VALIDATION

• IN WHAT WAYS DO WE SEEK VALIDATION FROM OTHERS?

• THE MORE WE SEEK VALIDATION, THE MORE WE PERCEIVE THREAT IN ALL SETTINGS

• “OTHER-VALIDATED” INDIVIDUALS CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

  1. COMPETE FOR ATTENTION
  2. EXCLUDE OTHERS WHO MAY TAKE THE LIMELIGHT
  3. SABOTAGE OTHERS
  4. SELF-AGGRANDIZE
  5. ISOLATE TO AVOID PERCEIVED THREAT
RESILIENCY
SKILL #4

- Identify up to 5 and not fewer than 3 people who you can teach and call on to keep you accountable.

CONNECTION & SUPPORT
SAMPLE DIALOGUE FOR REACHING OUT FOR SUPPORT

• I AM BECOMING AWARE THAT I MAY BE AT HIGH RISK FOR COMPASSION FATIGUE, AND IN ORDER TO BE RESILIENT I NEED TO SHARE ABOUT MY WORK. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO BE A PERSON IN MY LIFE WHO WOULD BE A SUPPORT? I WON’T VOMIT TRAUMA WHEN I CALL ON YOUR SUPPORT, BUT I WANT TO PREPARE A NARRATIVE. IT’S NOT A CONVERSATION – PLEASE LET ME GET THROUGH ALL THE INFORMATION SO I CAN EXPOSE MYSELF TO THE STORY WHILE I RELAX AND DESENSITIZE MYSELF TO THE SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS.
LOW IMPACT DEBRIEFING

• INCREASED SELF AWARENESS: CAN I OFFER A “CLIFF’S NOTES” VERSION AND STILL GET THE INFORMATION OUT?

• FAIR WARNING: ALLOW LISTENER TO BRACE THEMSELVES AND PREPARE

• CONSENT: ASK IF IT’S OKAY AT THAT MOMENT: DON’T SLIME YOUR LISTENER

• LIMITED DISCLOSURE: START ON THE OUTER CIRCLE AND SLOWLY WORK YOUR WAY IN
LOW IMPACT DEBRIEFING

HOW MUCH INFORMATION IS ENOUGH TO FEEL HEARD?
HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH FOR NOT SPREADING TRAUMA?
RESILIENCY
SKILL #5

SELF CARE
&
REVITALIZATION

SELF CARE ASSESSMENT
CATEGORIES OF SELF CARE

• **PHYSICAL**: YOGA AND SCUBA FOR TEACHING BODY AND BREATH REGULATION

• **PSYCHOLOGICAL**: JOURNALING OR SEEING A THERAPIST

• **EMOTIONAL**: LAUGH, CRY, PLAY, SOCIALIZE

• **SPIRITUAL**: NATURE, MEDITATION, RELIGIOUS RITUAL, SINGING, NOT ALWAYS NEEDING TO “KNOW” ALL THE TIME.

• **WORKPLACE**: BOUNDARIES, BREAKS, TIME MANAGEMENT
COMPASSION FATIGUE RESILIENCY PLAN
BOOKS FOR FURTHER GROWTH

• TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP: AN EVERYDAY GUIDE TO CARING FOR SELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS  VAN DERHOOT LIPSKY & BURK
• THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE: BRAIN, MIND, AND BODY IN THE HEALING OF TRAUMA VAN DER KOLK
• RESILIENCE: HARD WON WISDOM FOR LIVING A BETTER LIFE GREITENS
• MAN’S SEARCH FOR MEANING  FRANKL
• WRITING TO HEAL  PENNEBAKER