

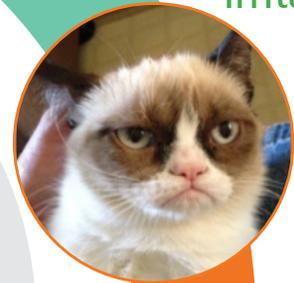
Compassion Fatigue's Path



Zealot



Irritability



Withdrawal



Zombie



Renewal vs. Pathology

COMPASSION RESILIENCE

LEAVE PROFESSION



Compassion Fatigue Cycle



Zealot/Idealist — We are committed, involved, and available... Ready to problem solve... Ready to make a difference... We willingly put in extra hours... Our enthusiasm overflows... We volunteer... We are willing to go the extra mile and often do so without prompting.... "I'll do that!!"



Irritability — We begin to see the imperfect nature of the systems and people around us... We distance ourselves from clients, their families, coworkers and friends... Begin to belittle our colleagues and clients... We talk unfairly about their challenges and denigrate their efforts... The use of humor is sometimes strained... We daydream or become distracted when clients are speaking with us... Oversights and mistakes begin to occur. We may notice our anger, cynicism, diminished creativity, and sadness.



Withdrawal — We are unable to embrace the complexity of the problems... We lose our ability to see clients as individuals rather they become irritants... Complaints may be made about our work and we might have problems in our personal life... We are tired all the time... We no longer wish to talk about work and may not even admit to what we do... We neglect our family, our coworkers, our clients and ourselves... Our shield gets thicker and thicker to block our pain and sadness. We may experience difficulty empathizing and feeling to numb to other's pain.



Zombie — Our hopelessness turns to rage... We begin to hate people... We even hate our coworkers if they dare question us... Others become incompetent or ignorant in our eyes... We work in a silo... We have no time for humor or fun. We may have a sense that we can't ever do enough, an inflated sense of importance related to our work, hyper-vigilance/ sleeplessness, and a sense of persecution.



Renewal vs. Pathology — If we have not addressed this cycle earlier, we come to a fork in the road where we either continue deeper into compassion fatigue to a place of pathology and victimization (overwhelmed, leaving the profession, changing positions and repeating the cycle, somatic illness) or we take a turn towards maturation and renewal (hardiness, resiliency, transformation).

