

Compassion Fatigue: Connection to Trauma, Stages and Assessments



Staff Support



Circle Agenda

Circle Topic		CR Session 3: Compassion Fatigue
Planning	Send the introduction document from Section 3 in the online toolkit at least 4 days prior to the circle to all participants. Highlight that there is a link to the Professional Quality of Life Questionnaire. The results are private. This session will help participants to better understand their results. Be sure to let participants know who is available to them if they would like to discuss their results.	
Purpose of Circle/ Learning Objectives	Introduce the cycle of compassion fatigue and use it for reflection on our patterns of fatigue and our resources for avoiding being stuck in the cycle.	
Materials/Preparation/Time	<p>Time: 45-50 min</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Circle kit <input type="checkbox"/> Shared agreements <input type="checkbox"/> Quote and mindfulness statements on flipchart paper <input type="checkbox"/> Cards with "Just like Me" prompts <input type="checkbox"/> A few copies of the Steps to Compassionate Action visual to place in the center of the circle <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the following for all participants: Compassion Fatigue Cycle <p>Set-up: Up to 15 chairs arranged in a circle without furniture in the middle</p>	

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<p>Welcome/Check-In (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Welcome group.</p> <p>Share: Today, the content we will share about the cycle of compassion fatigue will offer some insights into why offering compassion can be tough.</p> <p>Remind the group of the key circle components: talking piece, pass or speak, popcorn, centerpiece and agreements</p> <p><i>"You have dealt with so much, and done the best that you can, take a moment now to appreciate how strong you are."</i> — Karen Salmansohn</p>
<p>Grounding/Wellness Practice (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Often our compassion resilience relies on our ability to step back from negative encounters. Try this 5-step mindfulness exercise when you are with someone you serve, colleague or family member and feelings of compassion seem out of reach. Do it discreetly. We will practice by asking you to bring to mind someone who is a little difficult for you to be with at times. Eventually, you can use this to bring yourself out of a place of judgment in a tough interaction with another person. With your attention geared towards the other person, tell yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in their life. — Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in their life. — Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness, and despair. — Just like me, this person is seeking to fill their needs. — Just like me, this person is learning about life.
<p>Review (5 minutes)</p>	<p>(Talking piece) <u>Share one compass area and something you did to be resilient in that area since our last circle.</u></p>
<p>Guiding Questions (25 minutes)</p>	<p>Handout the Compassion Fatigue Cycle and review how an individual is impacted by their expectations, work environment and the systems that influence it. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zealot = early career, desire to change the world ▪ Irritable = realizing the imperfections of the people and systems needed to reach positive outcomes for those they serve ▪ Withdrawn = escaping from the needs and expectations of the work environment ▪ Zombie = isolating from all others in order to survive the realities of the workplace and job requirements

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<p>Guiding Questions (25 minutes) <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Divide the group into four smaller groups — one per stage of the cycle: Zealot, Irritable, Withdrawn, Zombie</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (In your group) Discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>What feelings and experiences might contribute to a person “hanging out” in this stage – even to becoming one’s norm?</u> b. <u>How would that lead to one’s inability to act with compassion during your workday?</u> (Think of any impact on specific steps of compassionate action.) 2. (Full group) Share your key insights with the larger group. 3. (Popcorn) <u>Share a story of renewal or resilience you have witnessed during your time in your career – yourself, colleagues or family members.</u> 	
<p>Putting it into Practice (5 minutes)</p>	<p>(Talking piece) <u>Pick a stage and picture if a friend or colleague were in that stage, what you would offer to them as a mentor?</u></p>	
<p>Closing (5 minutes)</p>	<p>(Talking piece) <u>Share a mantra, quote, affirmation or mindset that has been helpful to you to minimize compassion fatigue.</u></p> <p>Bonus Activity: Share the link with the grounding activity from this session and other helpful practices to develop compassion through mindfulness.</p>	