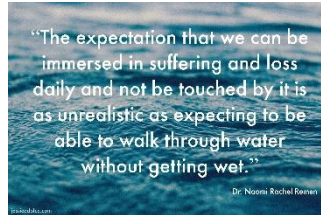


There is a cost to caring.



Professionals who listen to the stories of fear, pain and suffering of others may feel similar fear, pain and suffering simply because *THEY CARE*. Professionals especially vulnerable to **Compassion Fatigue** include emergency care workers, counsellors, mental health professionals, medical professionals, clergy, advocate volunteers, and human service workers. If you ever feel as though you are losing your sense of self to the clients you service, you may be suffering from Compassion Fatigue.

Compassion Fatigue represents the cost of caring about and for traumatized people. Compassion Fatigue is the emotional residue of exposure to working with the suffering, particularly those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. Professional who work with people, particularly people who are suffering, must contend with not only the normal stress or dissatisfaction of work but also with the emotional and personal feelings for the suffering.

Compassion Fatigue is NOT “burnout”

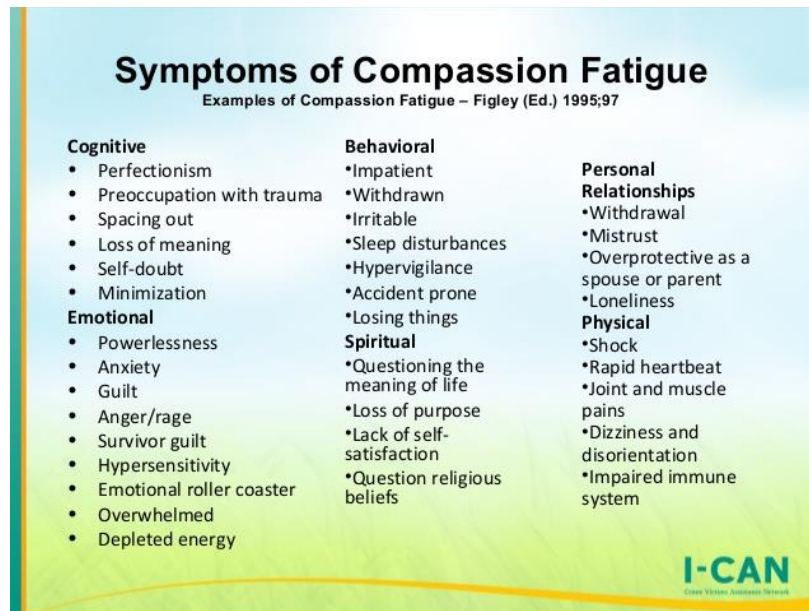
Burnout is associated with stress and hassles involved in your work; it is very cumulative, is relatively predictable and frequently a vacation or change of job helps a great deal. Compassion Fatigue is very different. Compassion Fatigue is a state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of clients as manifested in one or more ways including re-experiencing the traumatic event, avoidance/numbing of reminders of the event, and persistent arousal. Although similar to critical incident stress (being traumatized by something you actually experience or see), with Compassion Fatigue you are absorbing the trauma through the eyes and ears of your clients / patients. It can lead to secondary post-traumatic stress.

There are human costs associated with Compassion Fatigue. Job performance goes down and mistakes go up. Morale drops and personal relationships are affected, people's home lives start to deteriorate, personality deteriorates and eventually it can lead to overall decline in general health.

Signs and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

Each individual will have their own warning signs that indicate that they are moving into the danger zone of compassion fatigue. These will include some of the following:

- Chronic Exhaustion
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Anger and irritability
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Dreading work
- Diminished sense of enjoyment of career
- Disruption to work view, heightened anxiety or irrational fears
- Intrusive imagery or dissociation
- Hypersensitivity or insensitivity to emotional material
- Difficulty separating work life from personal life
- Absenteeism – missing work, take many sick days
- Impaired ability to make decisions and care for clients/patients
- Problems with intimacy and in personal relationships



Compassion Fatigue is looming right now in healthcare with the COVID pandemic.

Being the “family member” of a COVID patient as they take their last breaths is taking its toll.

If you feel you are at this point or approaching it, please reach out for help. One of the benefits UAMS offers is the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) **free** of charge.

UAMS Cares about you.

They have appointments Monday through Friday and you can make an appointment by calling 501-686-2588 or 800-542-6021. For more information, please go to www.uams.edu/eap.

AEAP is available for emergency phone consultations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays.