Compassion Fatigue when Caring For the Addicted Patient

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Objectives

- Define compassionate care
- Identify how to utilize compassionate care with the patients in all stages of change
- Describe how to use compassionate care while networking with other providers
- Identify ways to cultivate self care

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Definition of Compassion

• "Sympathetic consciousness of other's distress together with a desire to alleviate it"

Merriam/Webster's Dictionary

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Compassionate Care

Compassionate Care is defined by the following characteristics:

- Empathy, emotional support and a desire to relieve a patient's distress and suffering;
- Effective communication at all stages of a patient's illness and treatment;
- Respect for patients' and families desires to participate in making healthcare decisions;
- Knowing and relating to the patient as a whole person, not just a disease.

(Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare)

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Can Compassion be Taught? or is it "A Gift of the Gods"

- Most popular view of teaching compassion is role modeling. (It is developed or not by the shape of the environment in which we learn)
- "Recent study shows that cultivating compassion and kindness through meditation affects brain regions that can make a person more empathetic to others".

Science Daily (Mar.26, 2008)

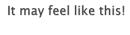
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What is Compassion Fatigue?

The "cost of caring" for others in emotional and physical pain. (Figley, 1982)

"It is characterized by deep physical and emotional exhaustion and a pronounced change in the helper's ability to feel empathy for their patients..."







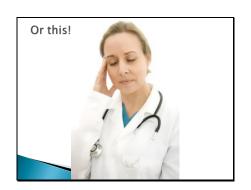
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Or this!





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Compassion Fatigue vs. Burnout Related to a worker's interaction with patient's trauma. Faster onset, occurs with little warning, faster recovery rate. Characterized by physical, emotional, cognitive, and mental symptoms. Characterized by physical, emotional and mental exhaustion.

Compassion Fatigue is often triggered by patient care situations in which the nurse:

- Believes that their actions would "not make a difference" or "never seemed to be enough";
- 2. Workday stress (heavy assignments, high acuity);
- 3. Had personal issues such as inexperience or low energy.
- 4. Identified with the patient;

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Compassion Fatigue and the Difficult Patient

Why are some patients difficult? They don't know what to expect.

The feel ignored.

They feel they are being treated rudely.

They feel they have no control.

They feel no one cares.

They feel afraid.

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What makes the addict different from any other difficult patient?





How do you care for a difficult patient?

- > You don't have to like them, but avoid being judgmental.
- You do have to provide the best possible care, while maintaining an appropriate level of professionalism and compassion.
- Set limits.
- Be patient and tolerant
- Be consistent.
- › Listen to what they are saying. Watch for nonverbal cues.
- $\,\,{}^{}_{}_{}_{}_{}_{}_{}_{}_{}$ Alter thoughts to change feelings. We feel what we think!

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Stages of Change

- > **Precontemplation**: Unaware of problem or not considering change.
- **Contemplation**: Acknowledges there is a problem. Thinks about solutions.
- **Preparation:** Ready to change in the near future. On the verge of taking action.
- Action: Ready to implement the plan for change.
- Maintenance: Sustaining change.

Prochaska and DiClemente, 1983, 1992

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Important Elements of Compassionate Care at any Stage

- Showing respect for patients, their families, and those important to them;
- > Treating patients as people, not a disease;
- Conveying information in a way that is understandable;
- Listening attentively to patients;
- Gaining the patient's trust

Schwartz Center Survey (2010)

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Networking with Providers



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Be a patient advocate

- "A patient advocate is a supporter, believer, sponsor, promoter, campaigner, backer or spokesperson".
- Be aware of the resources available for the patient.

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Nurses Code of Ethics

- Provision 5.
- "The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth".

Caring For Yourself in the Face of Difficult Work

10 things to do each day

- Get enough sleep.
 Get enough to eat.
 S. Do some light exercise.
 Vary the work that you do.
 Do something pleasurable.
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Tidbits



- You're responsible for your task, God is responsible for the outcomes.
- You're not God.
- > The need will always be greater than the resources.
- Use care in how you measure "success"
- Value small victories.
- Who you are is as important to the mission as what you do.
- Their pain is not your pain.
- Don't take them home with you.
- Remember to care for your spirit, emotions and body so that there will be something left to give. Rev. Samuel Woods

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"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose."

Dr. Seuss