



Defined

- Compassion – sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it
- Fatigue – a state or attitude of indifference or apathy brought on by overexposure

COMPASSION FATIGUE

- *Apathy or indifference due to overexposure to being sympathetic to others' distress
- *Usually includes a feeling of tiredness



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The early days...

- 1992 - Carla Joinson, RN
- Compassion fatigue in Emergency Department nurses
- “compassion fatigue is a unique form of burnout which affects people in caregiving professions; this burnout is overpowering, invasive stress that can begin to dominate us and interfere with our ability to function.”



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Review articles

A systematic review of the effects of euthanasia and occupational stress in personnel working with animals in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and biomedical research facilities

Rebekah L. Scotney, GCvst; Deirdre McLaughlin, PhD; Helen L. Keates, BVSc, PhD

<https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.247.10.1121> (J Am Vet Med Assoc 2015;247:1121–1130)

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Compassion Fatigue, Euthanasia Stress, and Their Management in Laboratory Animal Research

<https://doi.org/10.30802/AALAS-JAALAS-18-000092>



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When the caring gets tough

Huggard, P.K. & Huggard, E.J. (2008). When the Caring Gets Tough: Compassion fatigue and veterinary care. *VetScript*, May, 14-16.

WHEN THE CARING GETS TOUGH **Compassion Fatigue and Veterinary Care**

Peter Huggard
Jayne Huggard

"One of the biggest favours any veterinarian can do for his or her patients, colleagues, and family, is to take self-care and stress control seriously".

Dr Lisa Miller (JAVMA News, 2004)



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TedxFargo

- Compassion Fatigue: What is it and do you have it?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-4m35Gixno>



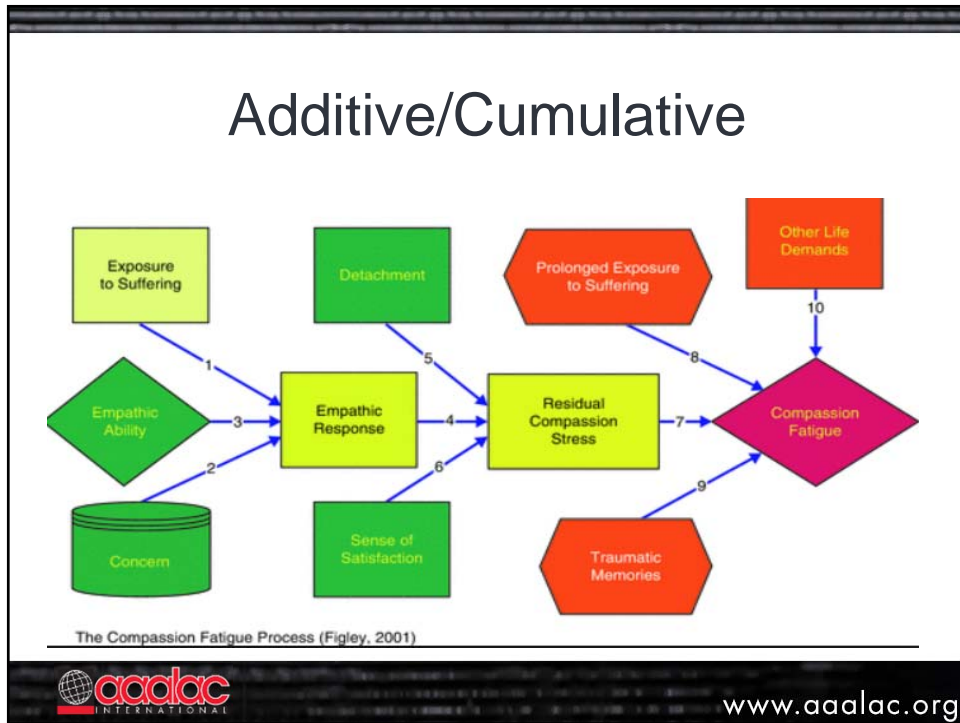
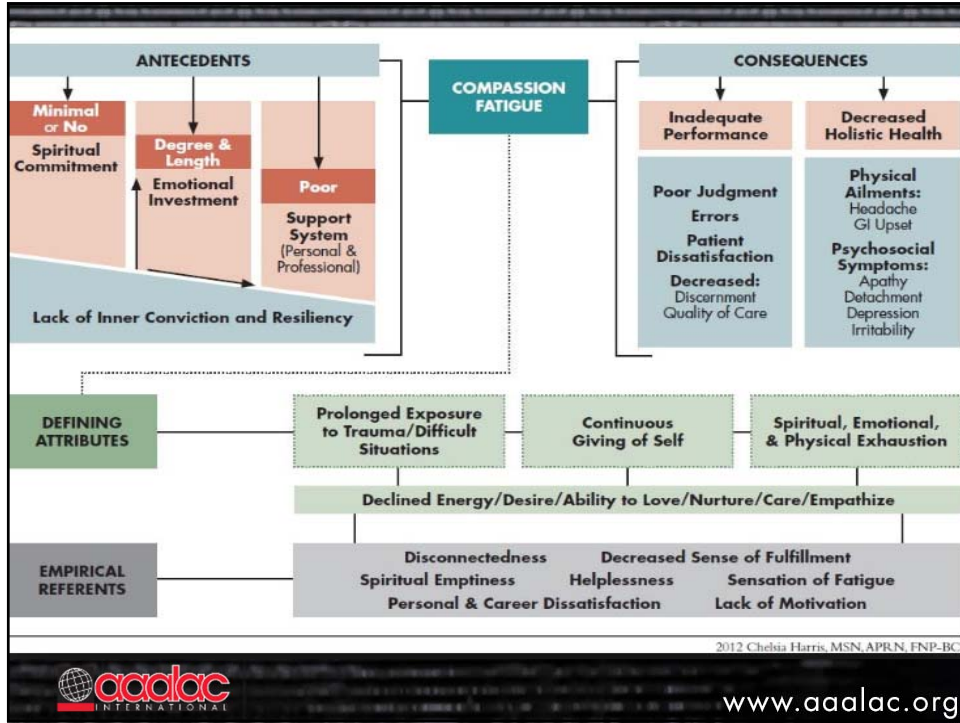
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YouTube

- University of Tennessee video
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6TCVZ9ONn4>



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Compassion fatigue trajectory

- Zealot phase
 - Keen, committed, enthusiastic, extra hours
- Irritability phase
 - Cut corners, avoid pt contact, mocking, daydream
- Withdrawal phase
 - Exhausted, clients become irritants, neglect (family, coworkers, clients, ourselves)
- Zombie Phase
 - Automatic pilot, disdain for clients, no compassion, no patience
- Pathology and Victimization vs. Renewal and Maturation
 - Overwhelmed, ill, leaving profession vs. transformation/resilience

Initially from Jan Spilman 2010 inservice: Caring on empty: creative tools for compassion fatigue transformation and resilience



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So many questions

- Do I have compassion fatigue?
- Do those that work for/with me have compassion fatigue?
- How can I determine if I have compassion fatigue?
- What do I do about it?
- Should I be worried if I don't have it?



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CFAP

<http://compassionfatigue.org>

"Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper."

Dr. Charles Figley
Professor, Paul Henry Kurzweg Distinguished Chair
Director, Tulane Traumatology Institute
Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

While the effects of Compassion Fatigue can cause pain and suffering, learning to recognize and manage its symptoms is the first step toward healing. The Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project® is dedicated to educating caregivers about authentic, sustainable self-care and aiding organizations in their goal of providing healthy, compassionate care to those whom they serve.



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Dealing with CF

- Self-care
 - Develop a plan
 - Implement plan
 - Adjust as necessary
- Ask for help
- Work to improve your resiliency
 - an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change



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Contributing Factors

- Family obligations
 - Spouse
 - Parent(s)
 - Children
 - Pets
- Friends
- Societal
- Media/News



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3-pronged approach

Organization

Peers/Staff

Self



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Don't try to be everything to everyone

Nothing is sustainable without boundaries.

- Brené Brown



Conclusions

- It is ok to talk about Compassion Fatigue
 - Create a space to allow this to happen
- It may or may not occur depending on a lot of factors
- There is increasing research and resources available
- If you encounter a situation beyond your capability, ask for expert help

Thank You!

accredit@aaalac.org
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