



Compassion Fatigue

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Define compassion fatigue
- Recognizing the signs of compassion fatigue
- Climate change
- The cost
- Where do we go from here?



A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark night sky. The aurora appears as vibrant green and blue streaks and curtains of light. The image is partially obscured by a large teal semi-circle on the right side of the slide.

Introduction

- Who am I?
- Why am I talking about compassion fatigue?

Acknowledgement

The information in this presentation specifically about compassion fatigue has come from:

TEND ACADEMY LTD (<https://www.tendacademy.ca/>)

- Compassion fatigue/emphatic strain training and education
- Provide resources and materials
- Francoise Mathieu – founder
 - Mental health professional that recognized the need for resources for those suffering from what we now know is compassion fatigue.
 - Has been doing this work for over 22 years

Take Time for Your Life

Cheryl Richardson

“Running on adrenaline and numbing out”

- ☐ Do you repeatedly check your voicemail/email throughout the day?
- ☐ Is your schedule so full there is no time left for you?
- ☐ Do you feel lost without your cell phone?
- ☐ Do you put things off to the last minute or use tight timelines to get things done?
- ☐ Do you find yourself in frequent conflict with others?
- ☐ Do you usually speed while driving?
- ☐ Do you put off making decisions or taking action in spite of the anxiety it causes?
- ☐ Do you wake in the middle of the night with your thoughts racing, unable to sleep?
- ☐ Do you juggle several projects at once?

What is Compassion Fatigue?



Compassion Fatigue

BURNOUT

Empathic Strain

RUN DOWN

STRESS

TRAUMA

Exhaustion

Moral distress

Empathy vs Compassion

- Empathy – is feeling another person's pain.
- Compassion – is taking action to relieve the suffering of others.



Compassion Fatigue

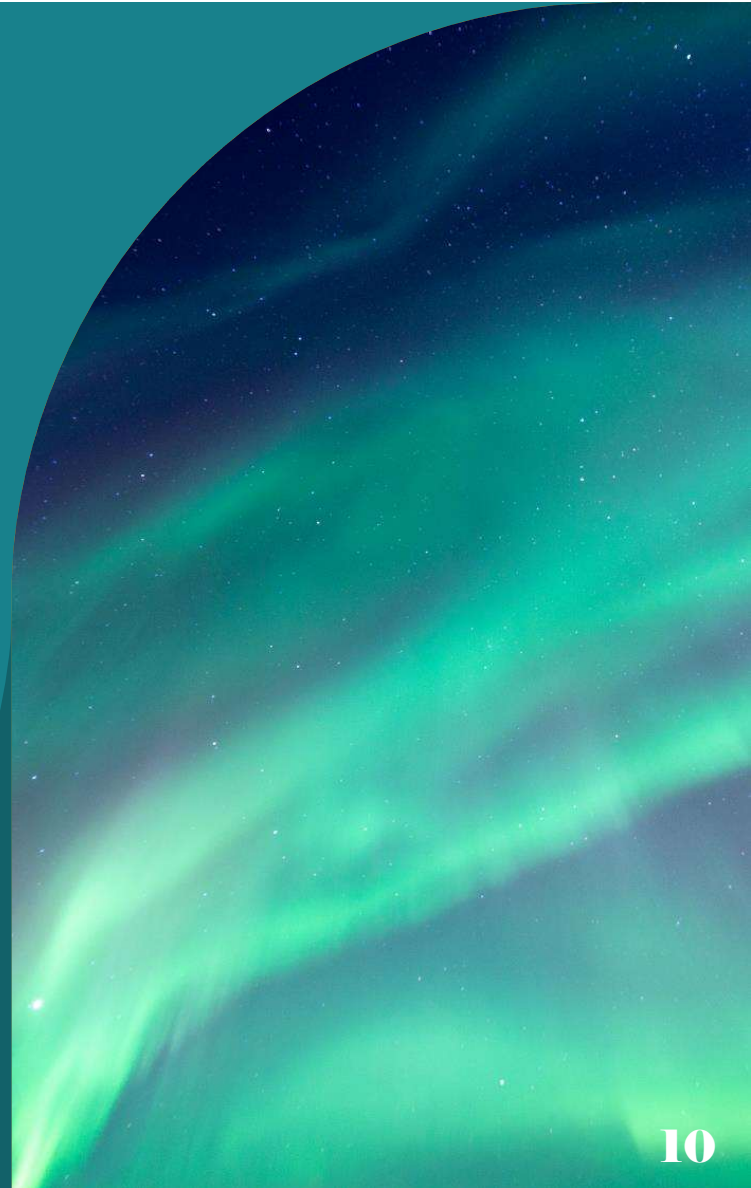


- Refers to the profound emotional and physical exhaustion that “helping professionals” and caregivers can develop over the course of their career.
- It is the gradual erosion of our empathy, hope and compassion.
- Compassion Fatigue is the “cost of caring” for others in emotional pain.
- Describes the potentially negative and cumulative effects of working in a helping profession.

The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to walk through water and not get wet.

Naomi Rachel Remen

Kitchen Table Wisdom, p.52





Who suffers from Compassion Fatigue?

- Compassion Fatigue is an occupational hazard, for those who have compassion and empathy for the clients they work with.
- Every worker who cares about their clients will eventually develop a certain amount of compassion fatigue, in varying degrees.
- Compassion fatigue generally does not exist on its own, it becomes more prevalent when stress, burnout, and work/life balance are challenged.
- Trauma/secondary trauma
 - It has been shown that trauma whether it is experienced directly (something happens directly to you or a close family member), or whether it is experienced through someone relating the details of that trauma, in both cases the person can be traumatized.

Recognizing the signs of compassion fatigue

Characterized by deep emotional and physical exhaustion

Symptoms resemble depression and PTSD

Shift in the sense of hope and optimism about the future and the value of the work

The level of compassion fatigue that is suffered can ebb and flow from one day to the next.

Start seeing changes in our personal and professional lives

Become dispirited and increasingly bitter/cynical at work

Difficulty concentrating, more prone to errors, irritability

Find it difficult to rid ourselves of the images and experiences that have been shared with us.

Those suffering tend to work more rather than less.

The background is a solid teal color. On the left side, there is a large circular inset that shows a close-up, slightly blurred image of ocean waves. The waves are a lighter shade of teal, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on the theme of climate change.

Climate Change

The evolving workplace

Current state

Difficulty attracting the volume of new students needed

Shortage of funeral professionals

Difficulty retaining licensees in the profession

Increased turnover of licensees

Shift in demographics

Continued effects of the pandemic which slowed student progress and delayed ability to obtain licences.

What are funeral professionals experiencing?

Unmanageable workloads, staff shortages

More difficult family arrangements, changes to family dynamics

Increased expectations from families

Some licensees no longer willing to buy into the “this is the job, if you can’t take the heat, get out of the fire”

Increase in tragic, unexpected deaths (drug related, suicides)

No one willing to make arrangements for the deceased

Imbalance of work/life priorities

Continued effects of the pandemic

The “Cost”

IT ISN'T JUST ABOUT BUMS IN SEATS ANYMORE



Functional capacity

- Experienced licensees (2+ years) vs first year licensees
- Well balanced licensees vs stressed licensees
- Long term licensed employees vs transferred in employees with experience
- Consistent numbers of licensees but increased workload
- Experienced licensee training students

Organizational

Absenteeism

Overtime

Decrease in
quality of
service

Lower
employee/client
satisfaction

Increased
workload

Lost
productivity

Increase in
errors

Staff turnover
and retention
challenges

Individual

Physical health problems

- Cardiovascular, blood pressure, insomnia, fatigue, obesity

Mental health problems

- Depression, anxiety, self esteem

Behavioral problems

- Substance abuse, nutrition

Interpersonal problems

- Poor communication, social withdrawal, aggression, mistrust of others

Tangible costs

- What does it cost
 - to train a new hire to go through school, graduate and get licensed?
 - to train a new licensee to receive training/retraining on your specific business practices?
 - to replace an employee who has left for another funeral business?
 - to have an employee on health-related leave?
 - when a licensee leaves the industry for good?

Money

Time

Resources

Productivity

**Where do
we go from
here?**



Awareness



Tools



Education



Resources





Awareness



AN UNDERSTANDING OF
COMPASSION FATIGUE



CONFIRMING COMPASSION
FATIGUE EXISTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
SUFFERING



Education

Consider

Including this in formal education for new funeral professionals

Contemplate

Options for continuing education sessions

Engage

Compassion fatigue professionals to create sessions specific to funeral service



Tools



Mindfulness

Yoga
Meditation
Breathing exercises



Debriefing

One on one
Small group
Meetings



Exercise

Enjoyable activities
Walking
Movement



Resources



Research resources in your area



No need to reinvent the wheel, the is information out there



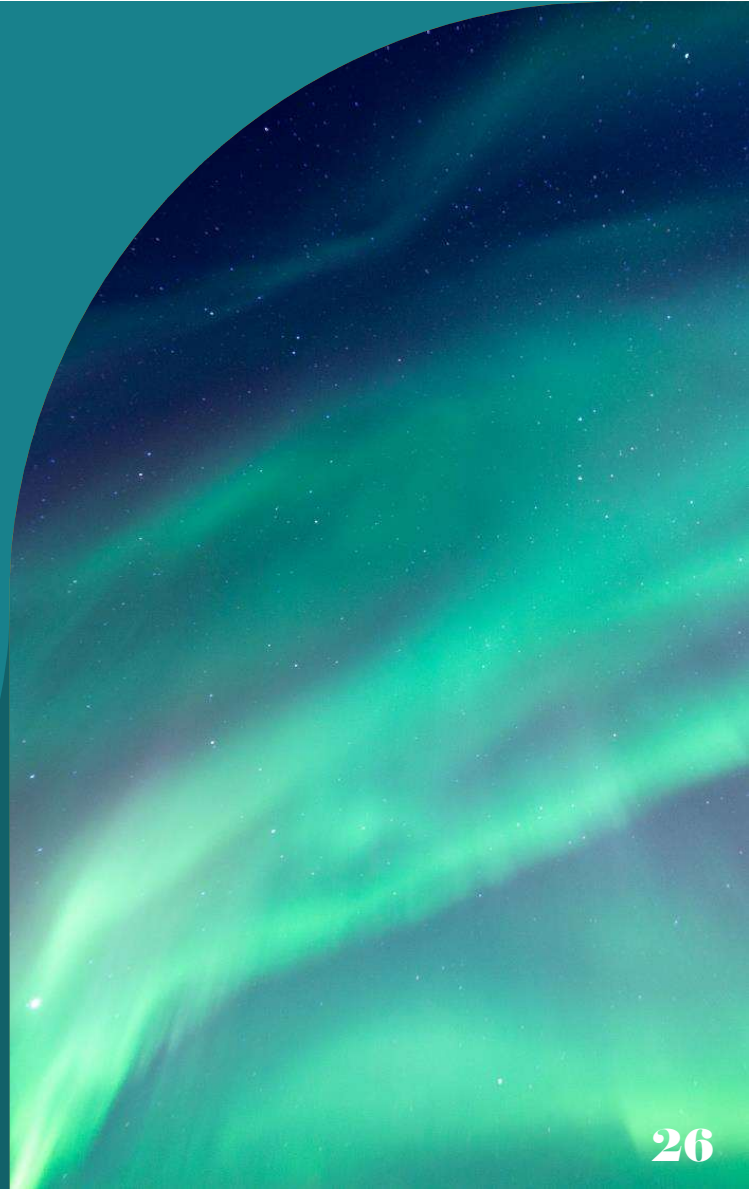
Share this information with colleagues and staff



TEND Academy Inc.

If you're walking down
the right path and
you're willing to keep
walking, eventually,
you'll make progress.

Barack Obama



A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark night sky, showing vibrant green and blue light patterns. The image is partially obscured by a large teal shape on the right side of the slide.

Questions