

Compassion Fatigue

At the beginning of the pandemic everyone was very understanding, compassionate and almost had extra compassion for the human race. From everyone understanding that meetings will have children running riot in the background to being hyper sensitive to other people's emotions. We went that extra mile to check on people and build those relationships with loved ones. Health workers on the frontline dealing with the gruelling day on day tasks and continuously working in crisis mode. But over time, compassion seems to have started to wear off. As well as the pandemic raging on with no end in sight, and other crises — like racial injustices, wildfires, and hurricanes — sucking our emotional energy even more. Before long, people started to find themselves burnt out, irritable and emotionally drained. Before you know it you willingly do things like avoid calls from family because you didn't have the energy to listen to what was happening in their lives, especially if you suspected they were calling with bad news. It just all felt like too much. Feeling on edge or numb this year has become extremely common.

Compassion Fatigue is a deep physical, emotional and spiritual exhaustion accompanied by acute emotional pain. Compassion fatigue can be seen through a decrease in the ability of a person to empathise due to physical and mental exhaustion.

The current COVID-19 situation came on so suddenly and insidiously that it has overwhelmed us physically, emotionally and spiritually and the resulting emotional pain appears to be longer term and more intense than burnout. From what is commonly reported among healthcare workers, Compassion Fatigue appears to manifest as continued experience of hyperarousal, hypersensitivity, emotional de-regulation, helplessness, worthlessness, disenchantment, low self-confidence and confusion of purpose. Symptoms commonly linked are irritability, anxiety, dread at having to care for another person, diminished sense of fulfilment in helping another person, insomnia, headaches, weight loss, overeating and even substance abuse.

Recognising the early signs would mean being aware of the possibility of this happening and recognising and accepting that everyone is vulnerable. It would be important to realise the extraordinary nature of the present crisis which requires an extraordinary response.

How to combat compassion fatigue

- Practice self-kindness
- Common humanity
- Mindfulness
- Be aware of how bad news affects you
- Stop doom scrolling
- Find proactive ways to help others
- Focus on what you can control

Please join us for a webinar and further discussion - **'Compassion Fatigue'** this is being delivered live on **Wednesday 25th August at 12pm**, please use the below link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5628618142855512843>