

Compassion Fatigue

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2019

Why it's important?

As a Trauma Informed Organization, we recognize that Compassion Fatigue is a part of human service work.

Compassion Fatigue has an impact on all employees, not just direct care staff.

The not-for-profit human service environment lends itself to more stressors for employees in all roles.

Staff members' relationships with our clientele is the largest factor that impacts healing. We, as managers should recognize that keeping our staff members healthy will have a positive impact on our business.



While staff in all roles are subject to experiencing Compassion Fatigue, those in case direct care roles are particularly vulnerable to these stressors and need an outlet for the emotional stress they incur as a side effect of this work. Developing a strong supervisory relationship with staff members is a part of detecting and mitigating early fatigue. The following tips are designed to assist supervisors in supporting staff members as they do this difficult work.





Have a variety of strategies to support your supervisees

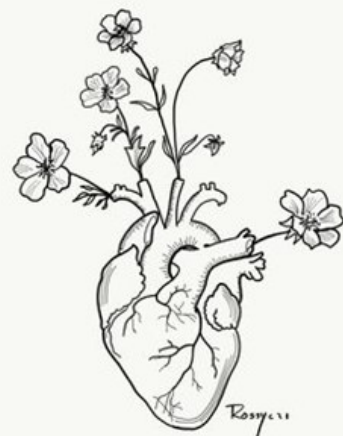
- Supervisors may not be able to be all things to all people, be comfortable allowing your staff to debrief and follow up with someone else if you're not available.
- Be able to separate support needs and technical needs.
- Getting to know your staff person is a crucial part of detecting early fatigue. Everyone needs different things to keep them healthy. Allow staff to determine what those things are.

MORE TECHNIQUES

- Encourage staff to use the built in time, like lunch and PTO. Include spaces at each location designed for self-care. Acknowledge that this looks different at each site.
- Be creative within the parameters of your program. PTO is not the only solution.
- Use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as a resource for your staff—administrative referrals as needed. Talk to HR about your options as a supervisor
- Encourage your teammates to use one another for support.
- Be mindful of introversion and extroversion.

SELF
CARE
COMES
FIRST

Your staff may seek support from other UCAN staff and managers. Please encourage this. Technically, you don't need to know who is offering the support, just that they have it. If your staff member is comfortable sharing who their support person is, check in with them to ensure they understand any challenges your staff member may be experiencing from your perspective.

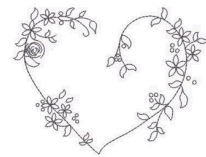


Prepare for supervision by ensuring there is a balance of meeting your supervisee's administrative and relational needs

- Consider adding self-care check in to a supervision checklist.
- Checklist for items such as PTO, stress level, workload, immediate needs, balance, and any other things that may be interfering with your ability to work effectively.
- Keep track of PTO time for your staff.
- Be an ambassador for self-care by ensuring that your department has procedures that protect employees' time and well-being, i.e. on call procedures.



Integrate caring for your employees into supervision meeting



- Meet regularly for supervision—have a regular schedule. May also require creativity.
- Allot time for self-care check in during regular supervision time and *honor* it. Add more time if necessary.
- Create advance directives—self-care plan as a new employee.
- Ask all employees how someone can tell when they're getting overwhelmed.

Questions to ask supervisees:

1. How are you connecting with your peers?
2. If you were having a particularly bad day at work, what would help you out of that negativity?
3. How do you know when you're feeling overwhelmed?
4. How are you doing? Physically? Emotionally? Mentally?
5. How will others know when you're overwhelmed?
6. What are your interests?
7. What do you do during your workday to de-stress?
8. What types of things help to recharge your battery? When was the last time you've done one of those things?
9. What do you need?
10. What makes you feel valued?
11. How do you like to be appreciated?
12. What motivates you?
13. How would you like to use our supervision time ?
14. How would you like to check in? With whom?

