

Promoting Workplace Health by Diminishing the Negative Impact of Compassion Fatigue and Increasing Compassion Satisfaction

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Compassion fatigue negatively impacts workforce health while compassion satisfaction moderates or ameliorates the negative effects and challenges of professional caregiving. This article explores personal and organizational factors that may contribute to or diminish the impact of compassion fatigue on a human service professional's overall quality of life and suggests strategies to increase compassion satisfaction and improve overall workplace health.

FOR MANY SOCIAL WORKERS THE DECISION TO ENTER THE PROFESSION was “guided by compassion for humanity and an altruistic desire to improve individual and societal conditions” (Radley & Figley, 2007, p. 207). Personal spiritual convictions and teachings found in faith literature are often underlying influences that lead to this commitment. While an initial “call” to serve others may lead individuals to enter this field, the harsh realities of the profession often negatively impact this idealistic dream. Social workers are in constant contact with suffering and traumatized individuals and families.

The traumatic impact of child abuse, domestic violence, disasters, violent crime, accidents, and physical injury on the client may, in turn, be experienced by the helping professional as secondary trauma. Many studies confirm that those in the helping professions are at high risk of experiencing compassion fatigue as a result of the physical and emotional impact