



Noble Strength

Compassion Fatigue
and
Personality Styles

Presented by Joe Dwyer



Goals

- ❖ Understanding Compassion Fatigue
 - ❖ Definitions
 - ❖ External and Internal Causes
 - ❖ Understanding the CAPS Personality Styles
 - ❖ Personality Styles and Compassion Fatigue
- ❖ Suggestions for Combating Compassion Fatigue
- ❖ Moving Forward

Stress

Stress is a part of everyday life.

We tend to sweep our feelings of frustration, sadness and turmoil under the rug – or take them to work with us.

When stress becomes chronic, and combined with on-the-job stressors; it can lead to **COMPASSION FATIGUE**

Compassion Fatigue

- “Inner exhaustion caused by the stress of caring for and helping others who are traumatized or suffering”

- Charles Figley

- Similar to PTSD

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Some studies suggest that animal care professionals may be #1 in vulnerability to Compassion Fatigue

Secondary Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Vicarious Traumatization

- The severe distress that arises from working with a victim of trauma and that mimics the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder
- Often rapid in onset, often associated with a specific event
- Can distort view of self and others

Secondary Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Vicarious Traumatization

Symptoms include:

- Flashbacks
- Intrusive thoughts
- Nightmares
- Hypervigilance
- Physical symptoms

Burnout

- Physical, mental and emotional exhaustion related to long-term, cumulative stress of emotionally difficult tasks
- Gradual onset



Stress Continuum

Compassion Fatigue can occur suddenly or over time.

Burnout occurs over time

Compassion Fatigue is a factor in Burnout

Vicarious Traumatization can be acute or prolonged

Stress



Compassion Fatigue



Burnout



Similarities:

- Loss of energy
- Feeling of depletion
- Diminished ability to empathize
- Loss of joy

Understanding/Managing Compassion Fatigue

Steps to Identifying/Managing Compassion Fatigue

- ❖ Information
- ❖ Awareness
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Action

Causes of Compassion Fatigue

External Stressors

- ★ The nature of the work
 - Working with Traumatized People and Animals
 - Community
- ★ The wider system
 - Culture of the Practice/Animal Rescue Agency
 - Work Ethics (Workaholism vs Self-Care Mind-set)
 - Personnel Practices and Policies
 - Criteria for Reward and Advancement

Causes of Compassion Fatigue

Internal Stressors

- ❖ The nature of the Helper
- ❖ Empathy and commitment to make a difference drives us
- ❖ Our own unresolved issues and traumatic memories
- ❖ The Messiah Trap (Carmen Berry)
- ❖ Character Type – Perfectionist – Sensitivity
- ❖ Personality Style - CAPS Model

Personality Styles

*Identifying Your CAPS
Personality Style*

Four Basic Behavior Styles

❖ Controller

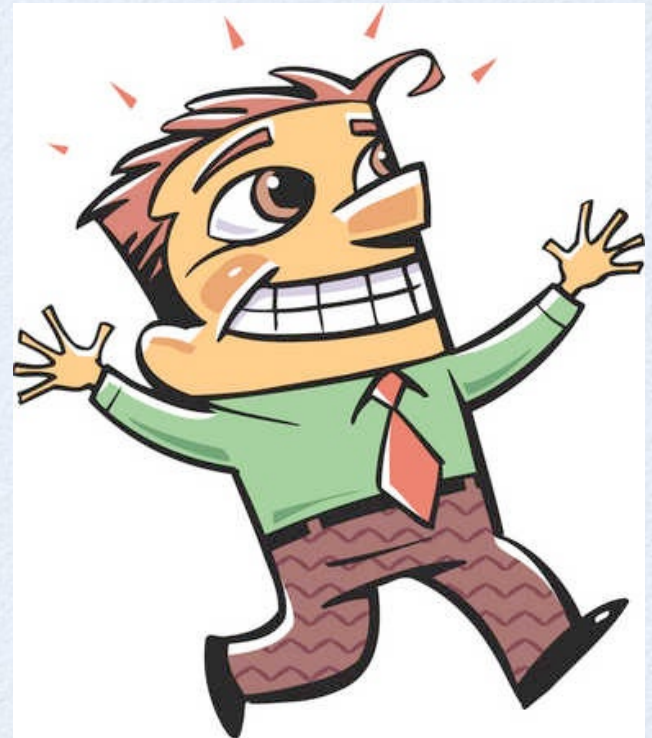
- ❖ Direct
- ❖ Decisive
- ❖ Driven



Four Basic Behavior Styles

❖ Promoter

- ❖ Image
- ❖ Enthusiasm
- ❖ Fun



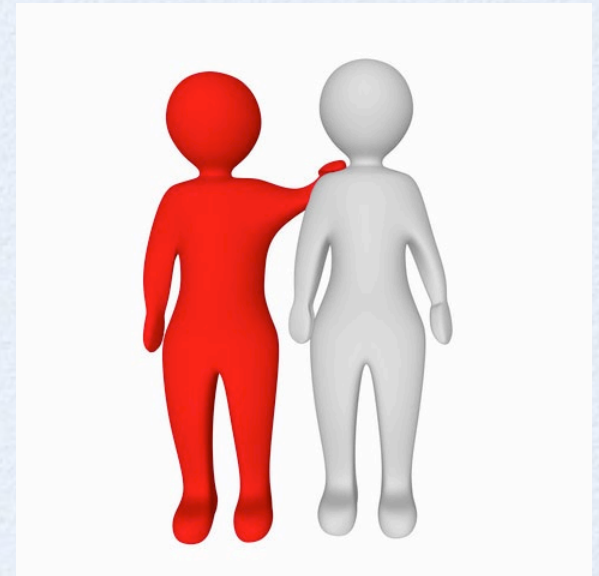
Four Basic Behavior Styles

❖ Supporter

❖ Sensitive

❖ Stable

❖ Sympathetic



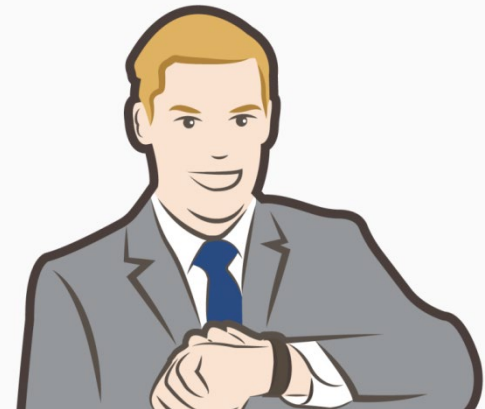
Four Basic Behavior Styles

❖ Analytical

❖ Careful

❖ Correct

❖ Conscientious



Question

**Based on what we've just discussed,
what personality style do you think
BEST describes you?**

- a) Controller
- b) Analytical
- c) Promoter
- d) Supporter

Reflection – Think about the people you work closest with. What personality style would you say they have? How can that help you in your dealings with them?

Compassion Fatigue and Personality Styles

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- ❖ Physical – Fatigue, Persistent Illnesses
- ❖ Behavioral – Anger, Sadness, Flatness
- ❖ Social – Absence/Tardiness, Ineffectiveness
- ❖ Spiritual – Loss of Faith, Loss of Purpose

Compassion Fatigue and Personality Style

❖ Controller

- ❖ Panic Attacks
- ❖ Short-Tempered
- ❖ Demanding
- ❖ Less Effective



Compassion Fatigue and Personality Style

❖ Promoter

- ❖ Take criticism personally
- ❖ Drained Energy
- ❖ Resist change
- ❖ Voice Complaints



Compassion Fatigue and Personality Style

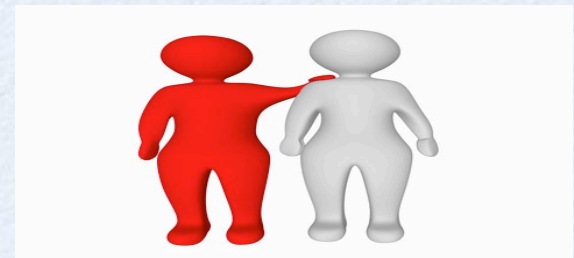
❖ Supporter

❖ Physical Ailments

❖ Lack of Task Completion

❖ Over Promise, Under Deliver

❖ Loss of Purpose



Compassion Fatigue and Personality Style

❖ Analytical

- ❖ Difficulty Concentrating
- ❖ Say “What’s the Use?”
- ❖ Do Not Comply with Logic
- ❖ Impending Doom



Discussion

- ❖ Examples of recent situations where someone's reaction in a stressful situation surprised you.
- ❖ How could you possibly have handled that better with the information we have discussed.

Things to Avoid While Combating Compassion Fatigue

- ❖ Important decision-making - Wait until you've recovered.
- ❖ Blaming others - Being adversarial will only create further stress and delay recovery.
- ❖ Looking for a new job – Wait until your self-perceptions are more logical and less emotionally charged
- ❖ Commiserating with discontented co-workers – Find a constructive environment in which to share feelings.
- ❖ “Quick-Fixes” – Do not engage in activities such as working harder and longer, drugs and/or alcohol, compulsive overeating and “retail therapy.”

Things to Remember

- ❖ **Compassion Fatigue is a Normal consequence of working as caregivers. It doesn't mean something is wrong with us.**
- ❖ **Identifying and Understanding our unique Personality Style can help us better Manage and Combat the effects of Compassion Fatigue.** It can also help us understand the behavior of the colleagues around us.
- ❖ **Information, Awareness, Assessment, and Action are all key steps in Understanding, Managing and Combating Compassion Fatigue**
- ❖ **Moving Forward – The Importance of an Individualized Self Care Plan.**

Contact Information

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