Ethics and Self Care

Janie Chappell RN, MSN
Deaconess Cross Pointe

Objectives

• Recognize our ethical duty for self care

• Identify risk and protective factors for compassion fatigue

• Develop strategies for developing and promoting self care

Presentation Outline

• Introduction
• Overview: Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Compassion Fatigue
• The Ethics of Burnout-What happens when we don’t take care of ourselves
• Strategies to promote self-care
Four main concepts describe the negative risks associated with helping professionals:

- Burnout
- Vicarious Traumatization
- Secondary Traumatization
- Compassion Fatigue

**Introductions**

**Review**

A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among those who do “people work”. It accumulates over time and causes an extreme reaction.

Concept first described in the late 70’s.

**Burnout**
Focus on others decreases a focus on self issues

- Higher rate of problems
- Stressors
- Impaired decision making

Vicarious Traumatization
Helping professional experiences the client or patient’s trauma as though it happened to them.

Cumulative, transformative effect upon the trauma therapist of working with survivors of traumatic events

Secondary Traumatization

- Nearly identical to PTSD
- Natural, predictable, treatable and preventable unwanted consequences of working with suffering people that is the cost of caring
  - Re-experiencing symptoms: Flashbacks—reliving the trauma over and over
  - Avoidance symptoms: Staying away from places, events, or objects that are reminders of the event
  - Hyperarousal Symptoms: being easily startled, feeling tense or “on edge”, having difficulty sleeping, and/or having angry outbursts.
Compassion Fatigue

The convergence of

• Primary Traumatic Stress
• Secondary Traumatic Stress
• Cumulative stress/burnout

Compassion Fatigue

• A state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of clients as manifested by
  – Re-experiencing the traumatic event
  – Avoidance/numbing of reminders of the traumatic event
  – Persistent arousal
  – Combined with the added effects of cumulative stress (burnout)

Self Care

Combination of 3 processes

• Self-awareness
• Self-regulation
• Balancing connections between self, others and the larger community

Professional Self-care—essential for ethical, competent professional practice
Implications

• Age and experience do not guarantee protection from compassion fatigue
• Staff in direct practice are highly likely to experience at least one symptom of secondary stress disorder
• Staff should routinely watch for signs of symptoms and take action accordingly

What Makes Us Vulnerable?

• Empathy
• Personal experience with trauma
• Unresolved trauma similar to client
• Trauma to vulnerable clients (children, disabled, older adults) is especially difficult
• Embedded in complex organizations with limited resources.

Ethics of Compassion Fatigue

• Higher risk of making poor professional judgments
• Misdiagnosis
• Poor treatment planning
• Abuse clients or others
10 Categories of Violation

- Violating boundaries
- Poor practice
- Competence
- Record keeping
- Honesty, confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Collegial actions
- Reimbursement
- Conflicts of interest

Lack of self care equals potential for problems

What is the Relationship?
Self Care

• Exercise
• Adequate Sleep
• Adequate Nutrition
• Relaxation
• Meditation
• Yoga
• Tai Chi
• Reading
• Music
• Hobbies
• Humor

Questions?