

# BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CLINICAL PRACTICE: CARING FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

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## Centering

## SAME CONCEPT, DIFFERENT TERMS?

- Vicarious trauma
  - Occupational hazard for care professionals who work with survivors of violence and trauma
  - Consequences of repeated exposure similar to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder
- Compassion fatigue
  - General sense of emotional and psychological fatigue as a result of repeated and chronic use of empathy with clients experiencing suffering (Newell *et al*, 2016).
  - Significant stress without secondary trauma reaction to warrant PTSD diagnosis
- Burnout
  - Emotional exhaustion
  - Depersonalization/Cynicism
  - Reduced sense of accomplishment/Inadequacy

## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE IN TROUBLE?

- Loss of interest in or desire for typically pleasurable activities
- Uncharacteristic irritability
- Decrease in ability to focus or concentrate
- Diminished or increased appetite
- Disruption in typical sleep patterns
- Lingering illness
- General feeling of being run-down
- Low energy/excitability
- Sense of hopelessness
- Desensitization
- Isolation
- Escapism
- Hyper-arousal
- Somatic pain

## IF YOU ARE STILL NOT SURE...

- Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)
  - [http://www.proqol.org/ProQol\\_Test.html](http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html)
- Life Stress Test
  - <http://www.compassionfatigue.org/pages/lifestress.html>
- These and other resources on compassion fatigue can be found through the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project (CFAP)
  - <http://www.compassionfatigue.org/index.html>

## SUFFERING

- Suffering is experienced across multiple dimensions
  - Physical
  - **Mental**
  - Spiritual
  - **Emotional**

# SUFFERING

- Suffering
  - Painful sorrow
  - Grief
  - Hurt
  - Fear
  - Hardship
- Conditions for subjective suffering (Tate & Perlman, 2019):
  - a loss of a sense of self
  - a negative affective experience

# INSTRUMENTAL NATURE OF SUFFERING

- Creative vs uncreative suffering (Fiumara, 2018)
  - Active engagement
  - Critical observation and reflection
  - Flexibility
- Illuminates the extent of our resources allowing the opportunity to create new ones (Brady, 2019)
- Builds resilience
- Connects us to the experience of living more directly than joy or happiness
  - Greater empathic response to negative events (Perry *et al*, 2012)

## HOW TO STAND-WITH SUFFERING

- Stand-with vs Withstand
  - *The only way out is through* (Frost, 1915)
  - *Intention, sustained presence, and the act of recognizing and acknowledging the patient's suffering are the ends to be achieved, even if the relief of suffering is not attained* (Tate & Perlman, 2019)

## FOCUSING\*

- Clear a space
- Locate a felt-sense
- Find a handle for the felt-sense and resonate with it
- Ask/Listen
- Receive
- Thanks and goodbye

\* For more information visit [www.focusing.org](http://www.focusing.org)

# THANK YOU!

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