

The Enemies Within: Combating Stress, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue

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Learning Objectives

- Define and describe stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue
- Describe the signs vicarious trauma and vulnerabilities of healthcare providers in compassion fatigue
- Understand self-care and organizational strategies for addressing stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue



**Why did you become a
PA?**



Agenda

- Learning Objectives
- Introduction
- Definitions and Overview
- Risk Factors
- Self-Care strategies
- Organizational strategies
- Resources



Stress - a reaction to a situation where a person feels threatened or anxious



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Challenges for Healthcare Personnel During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

- **Surge in care demands.** Many more people present for care, while increased healthcare personnel are sick or caring for family.
- **Ongoing risk of infection.** Increased risk of contracting dreaded illness and passing it along to family, friends, and others at work.
- **Equipment challenges.** Equipment can be uncomfortable, limit mobility and communication, and be of uncertain benefit; shortages occur as a result of increased, and sometimes unnecessary, use.
- **Providing support as well as medical care.** Patient distress can be increasingly difficult for healthcare personnel to manage.
- **Psychological stress in the outbreak settings.** Helping those in need can be rewarding, but also difficult as workers may experience fear, grief, frustration, guilt, insomnia, and exhaustion.

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at USUHS, 2020

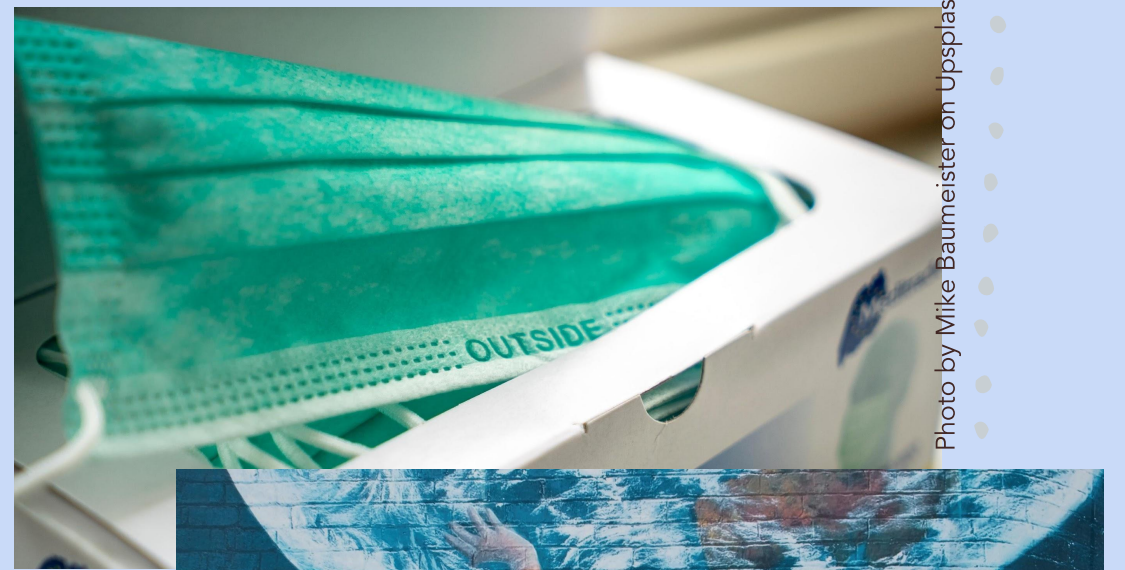


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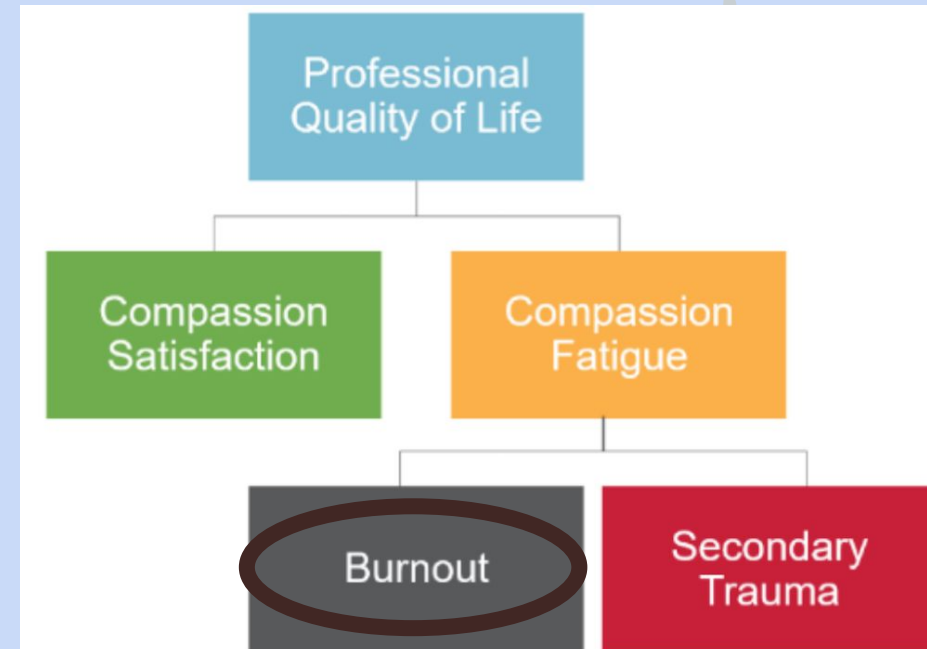
Burnout?

empathic distress ptsd
primary traumatic stress imposter syndrome
secondary trauma
burnout vicarious trauma
moral injury compassion fatigue
overwhelm

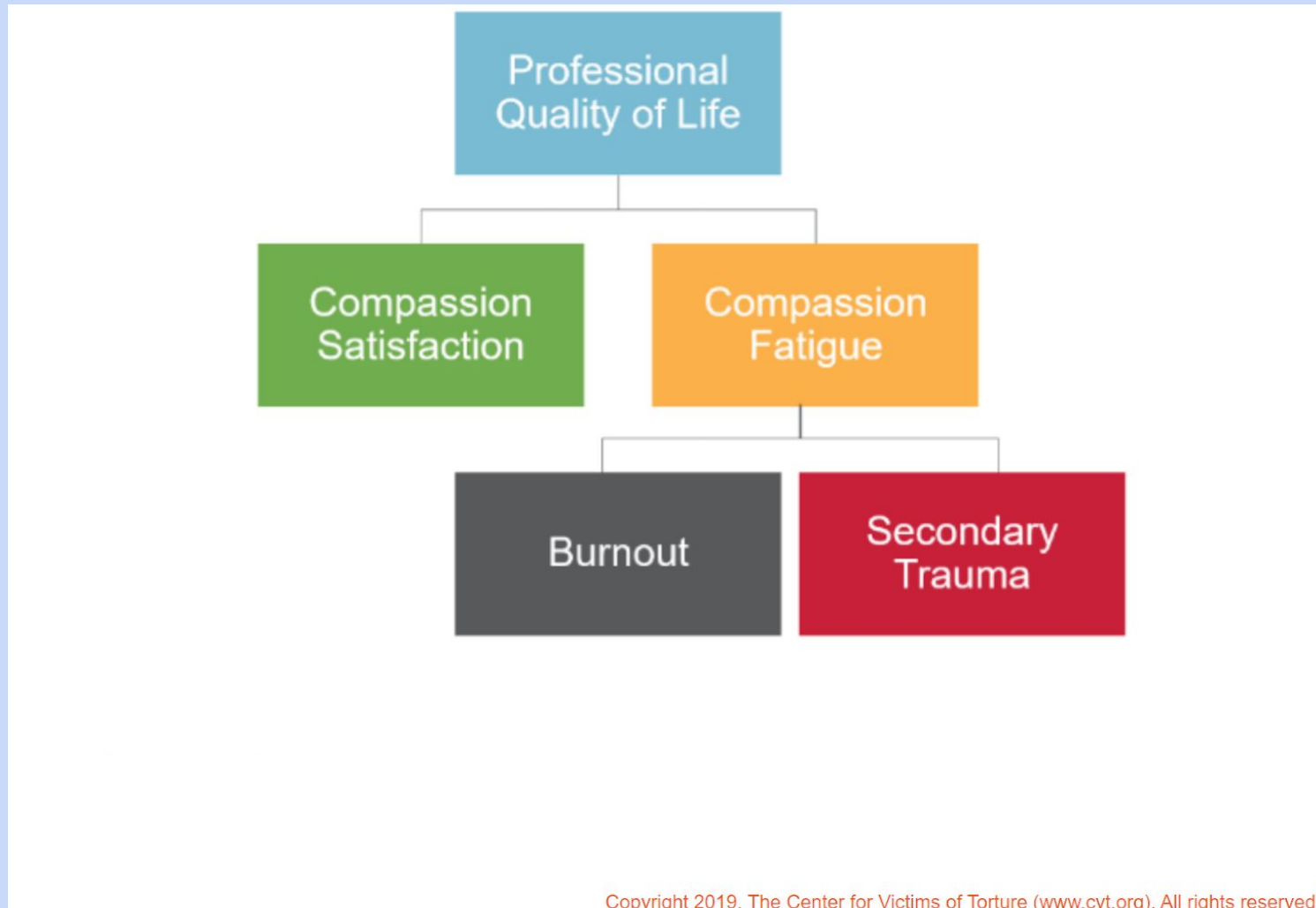
Burnout

ICD-10 code- Z73.0 Burnout: Physical and emotional exhaustion state

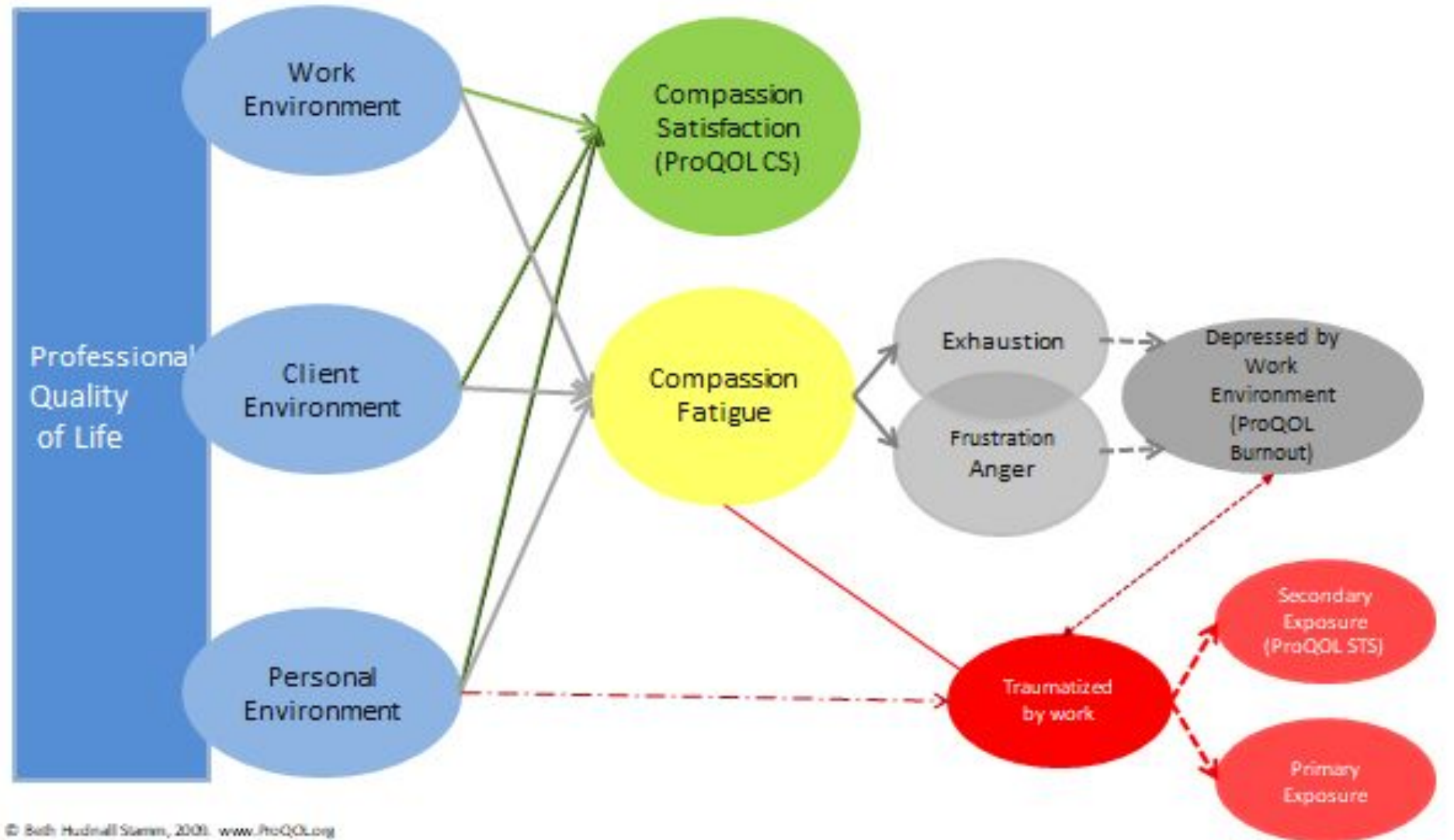
- “*syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed*” -World Health Organization
- ICD 10, three symptoms included in the list are:
 - feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
 - increased mental distance from one’s job or feelings negative towards one’s career
 - reduced professional productivity
- Gold Standard Measure: Maslach Burnout Inventory



A proposed structure for understanding burnout

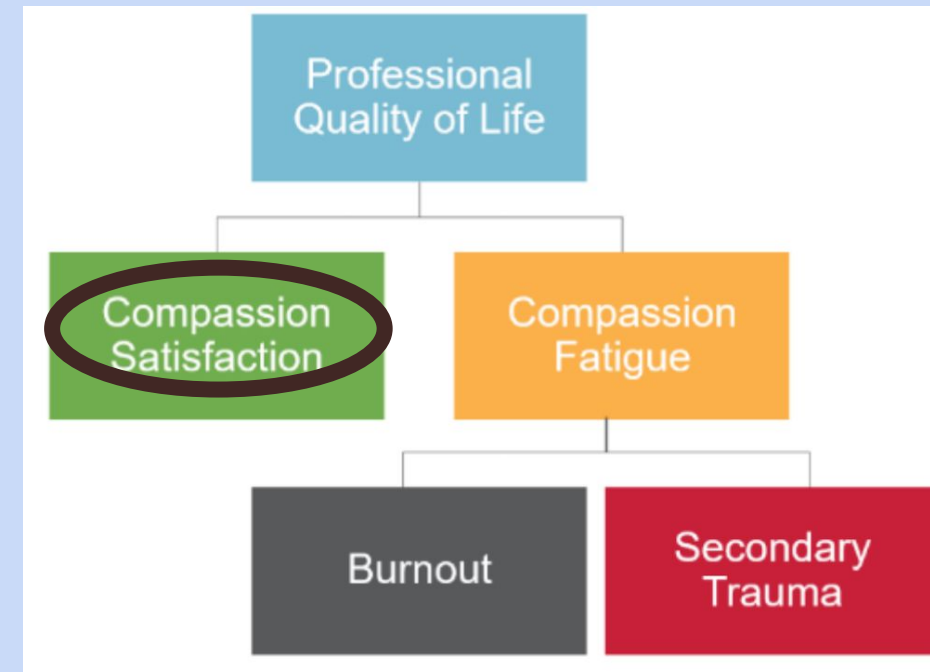


Complex Relationships



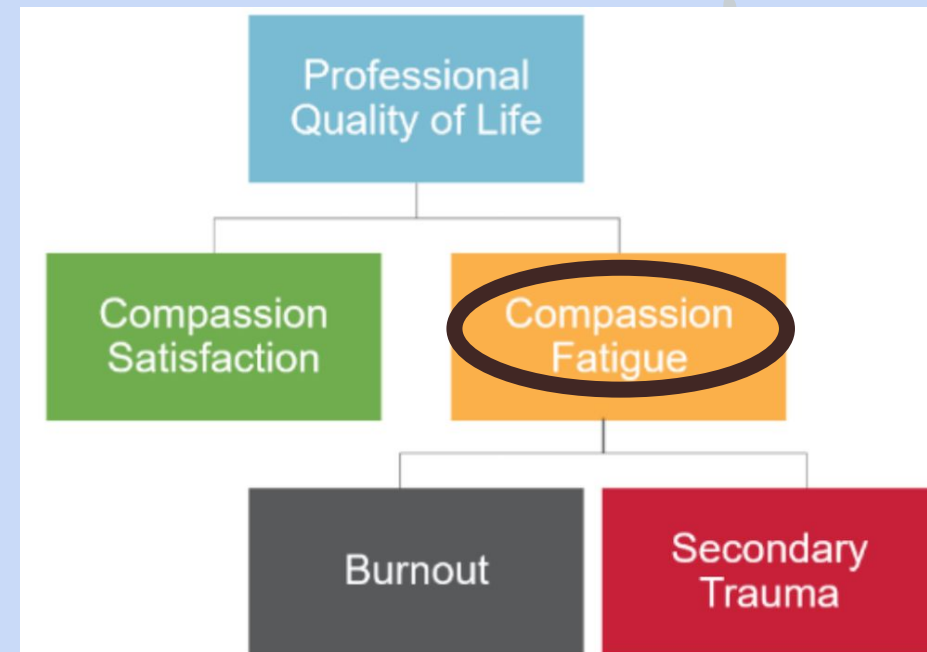
Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping
 - Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, caregiving systems
- May be related to:
 - Providing care
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
 - Altruism

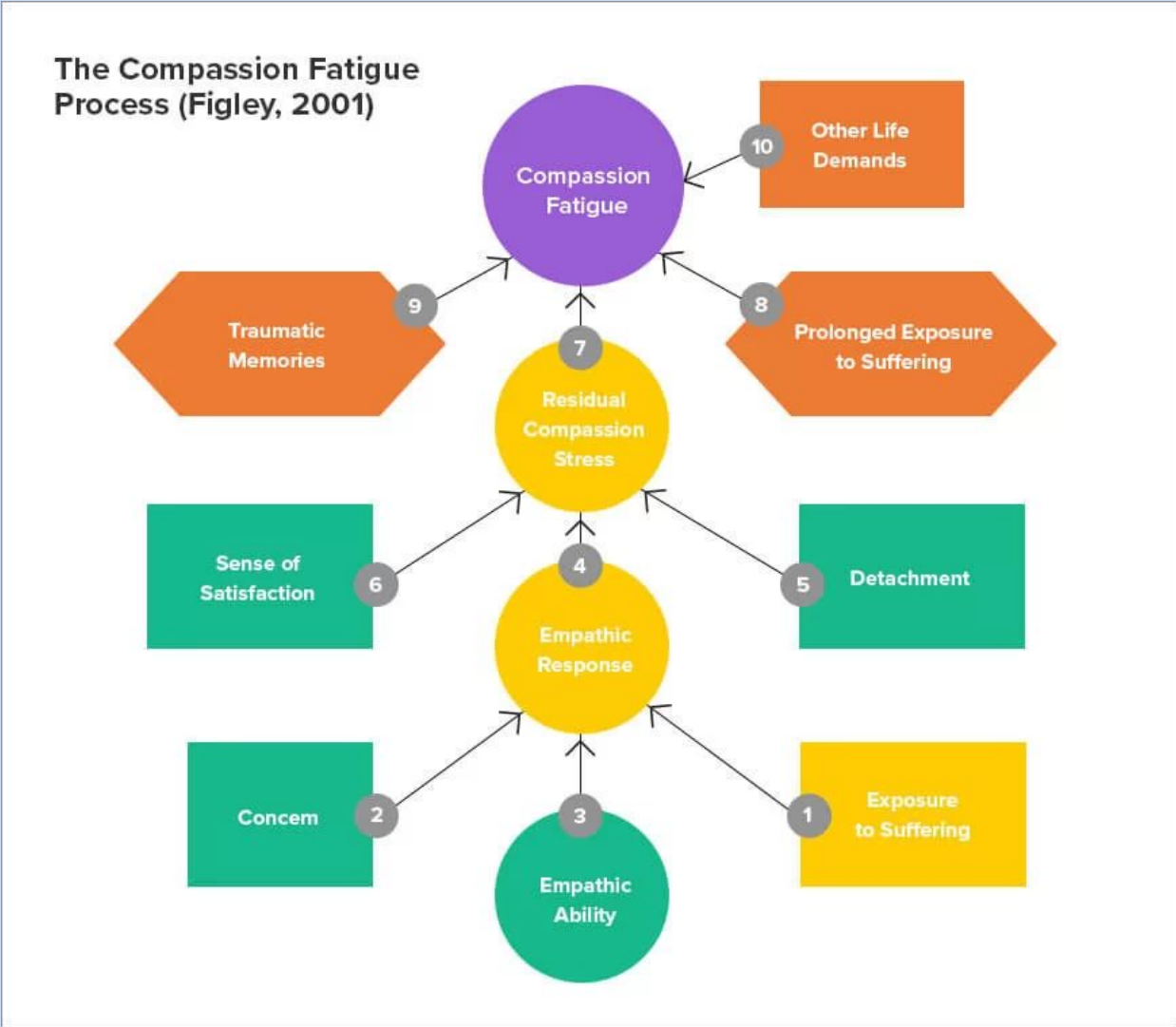


Compassion Fatigue

- Compassion Fatigue (CF) refers to the profound emotional and physical erosion that takes place when we are unable to refuel and regenerate
- The origins of compassion fatigue most likely took hold during a medical professional's formative years.



Compassion Fatigue

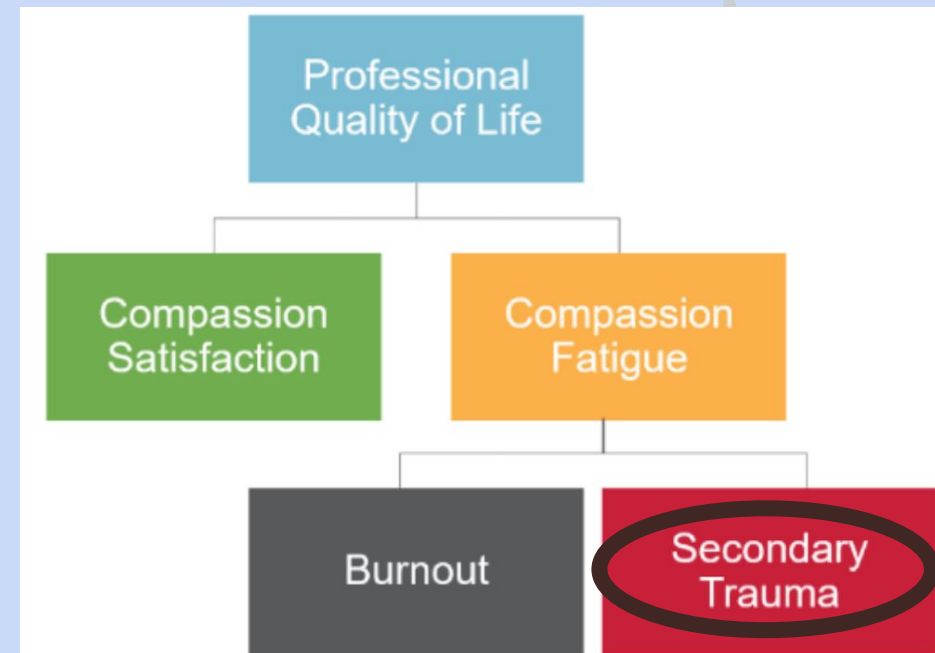


Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Primary Traumatic Stress

Secondary Trauma

Vicarious Trauma



Burnout and STS: Co Travelers

- Burnout

- Work-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy

- STS

- Work-related secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events

- Both share negative affect

- Burnout is about being worn out
- STS symptoms are rapid in onset

Vicarious Trauma

- Vicarious trauma is the emotional residue of exposure that providers have from working with people as they are hearing their trauma stories and become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured.

Potentially Protective	Potential Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Volunteer work- Preparation- Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Insufficient distance

Moral Injury

- ***Moral injury*** - a betrayal of “what’s right” by someone in authority or by one’s self in a high-stakes situation - *Shay, 2014*
- “morally injurious events, such as perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress [one’s own] deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.” - *Litz, 2009*
- Distinct from PTSD, results from crossing moral lines



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Recognizing the Enemies Within

Recognize the signs and symptoms of stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue

Physical Signs

- Physical exhaustion
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Headaches and migraines
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Somatization and hypochondria
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- Hypertension

Behavioral Signs and Symptoms

- Increased use of alcohol, drugs, food or other addictions
- Absenteeism, Chronic lateness
- Anger and irritability, blaming
- High self-expression and exaggerated sense of responsibility
- Less ability to feel joy
- Workaholism
- Forgetfulness

Long Term Effects

- Chronic health conditions
- Attrition from profession
- Problems in personal relationships
- Compromised care for patients
- Suicidality

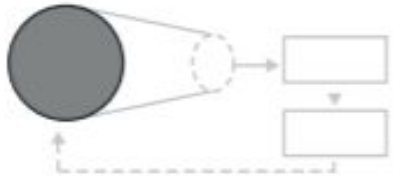
Risk Factors

- Overdeveloped sense of responsibility
- Poorly-defined boundaries
- Relating
- Lacking sleep
- Not taking breaks



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Systems Approach to Clinician Burnout



THE THREE LEVELS OF THE
SYSTEMS MODEL OF CLINICIAN
BURNOUT AND PROFESSIONAL
WELL-BEING



● | Frontline Care Delivery ● | Health Care Organization ● | External Environment

*Note: Care team members include clinicians, staff, learners, patients, and families.

- Frontline care delivery
 - The “work system”
 - Interactions among the care team
 - *Clinicians*
 - *Learners (i.e., trainees and students)*
 - *Patients and families*
 - *Support staff*
- Organizational culture
 - Payment and reward system
 - Management of human capital/human resources
 - Leadership and management style
 - Organizational policies
- External environment
 - Political
 - Market
 - Professional
 - Societal factors

Decisions made at the three levels of the system have an impact on the work factors that clinicians experience.

Systems Approach to Clinician Burnout

Create a positive work environment:

- Align Values and Expectations
- Rewards
- Mentorship
- Create positive learning environments
- Reduce Administrative Burden
- Enable Technology Solutions
- Provide Support to Clinicians and Learners
- Invest in Research on clinician Professional well-being

Reference: Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being (2019)

Combating the Enemies Within

Provide self-care techniques in addressing stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue



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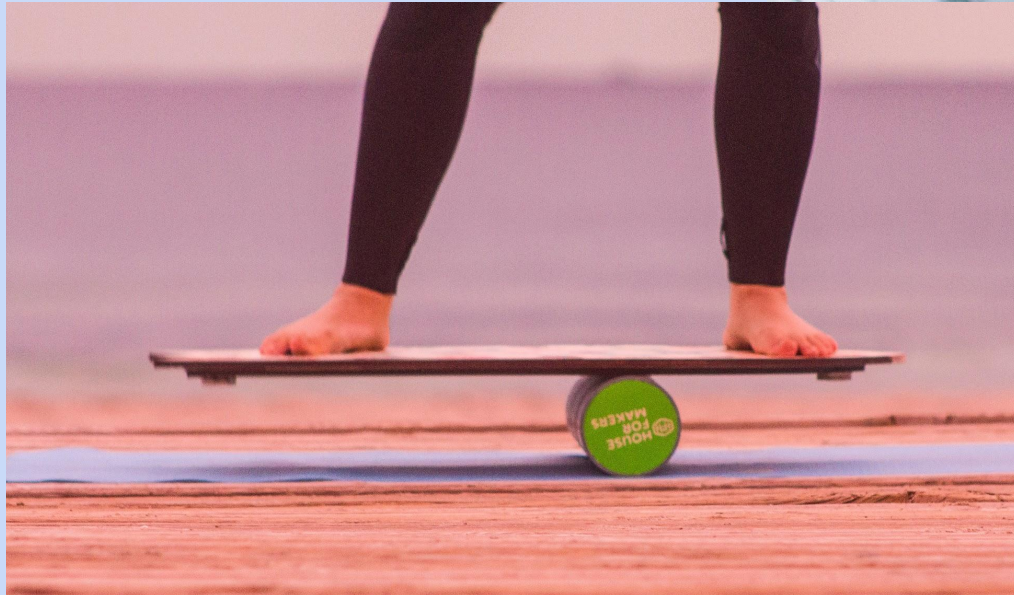
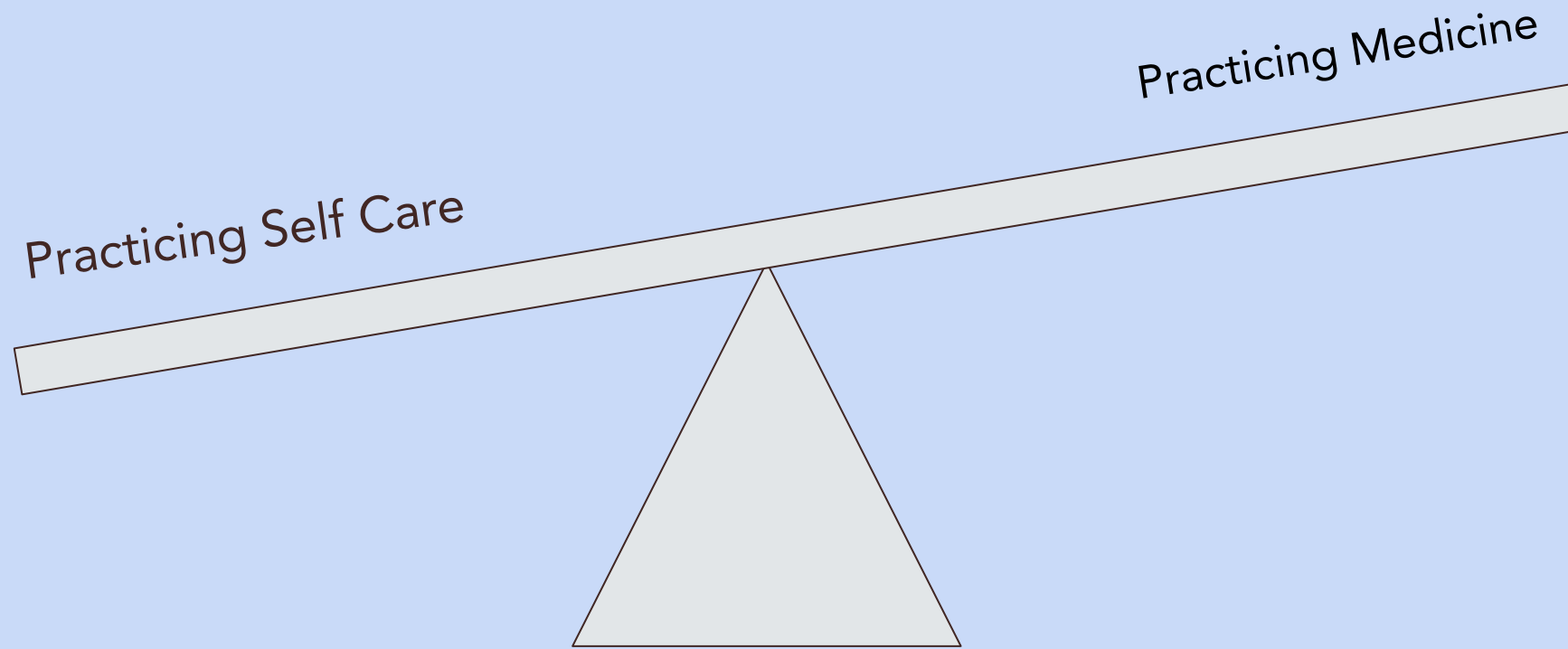


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Sustainable self care: a practice



You need both, and it's rarely balanced perfectly



Sustainable Self-Care: Take Inventory

- The ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life Scale: Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue). Pocatello, ID: ProQOL.org. Retrieved May 2011 from www.proqol.org

- Journaling

- RAIN:
 - Recognize
 - Accept
 - Investigate
 - Note



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Self-Care

Mental	Relationships	Physical	Hobbies	Techniques
Mindfulness/mindset	Family	“Performance Triad”	Learn something new	Routine/Calendar
Meditation	Connecting with others	Relaxation techniques	Time outdoors	Breaks
Teamwork/praise	Support Networks	Hydration	Sports	Vary Work
Switching	Friends		Make something	Setting Boundaries

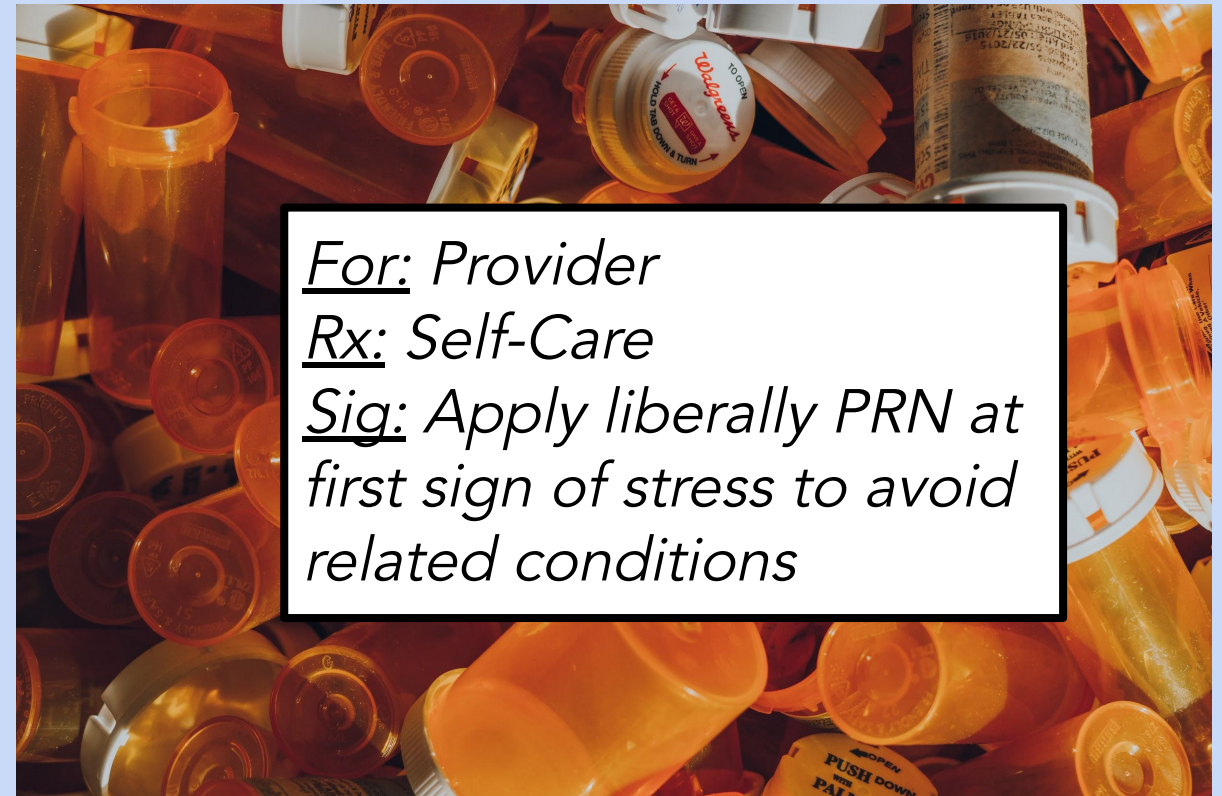
Sustainable Self-Care: Individual Time Management

	URGENT	NON URGENT
IMPORTANT		
NOT IMPORTANT		

Learn ways to say no and not feel guilty about it

Take-Home Points

- Self-care is essential to care for others; Take time for yourself
- Be aware of vicarious trauma and address it
- Recognize and identify emotions



Resources



Stress:

- What's different about the stress clinicians are facing (April, 2021- has info on COVID)
<https://www.smartbrief.com/original/2020/04/what%E2%80%99s-different-about-stress-clinicians-are-facing-and-what-can-help>
- Physician stress and burnout: the impact of health information technology <https://academic.oup.com/jamia/article/26/2/106/5230918>
- 5 factors contributing to physician stress during the pandemic (Oct 29, 2020)
<https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/5-factors-contributing-physician-stress-during-pandemic>
- 6 ways to address physician stress during COVID-19 pandemic (Mar 20, 2020)
<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/6-ways-address-physician-stress-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- On the road to burnout? How to set a different course (Jul 12, 2017)
<https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/road-burnout-how-set-different-course>

Burnout:

- National Academy of Medicine (NAM) Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience
<https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/>
- Burnout and Malpractice Litigation <https://physicianlitigationstress.org/identifying-and-managing-stress/burnout-malpractice-litigation/>
- Strategies for PAs to Prevent Burnout (Members Only)
<https://www.aapa.org/career-central/practice-tools/strategies-pas-prevent-burnout/>
- PA, Heal Thyself <https://www.aapa.org/career-central/practice-tools/pa-heal-thyself/>

Resources

Burnout (cont.):

- AAPA HOD Task Force to Prevent Burnout
<https://www.aapa.org/about/aapa-governance-leadership/house-of-delegates/hod-task-forces/>
- Provider Burnout and the Risk of Malpractice
<https://www.aapa.org/news-central/2018/05/provider-burnout-and-the-risk-of-malpractice/>
- Harvard Pilgrim <https://www.harvardpilgrim.org/provider/caring-for-your-patient/>
- Clinician Wellness <https://www.goodnessofheart.com/clinician-wellness.html>

Compassion Fatigue:

- Self-assessment for compassion fatigue: Professional Quality of Life Measure https://proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html
- AAFP - <https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2000/0400/p39.html>
- <https://www.edumed.org/resources/compassion-fatigue-online-guide/>
- <https://www.compassionfatigue.org/> -- webinars, website and reading list
- Books: *Treating Compassion Fatigue* - Charles Figley



Resources

Stress and Traumas:

- Understanding and Addressing Vicarious Trauma. L.A. Pearlman and L. McKay (2008). Headington Institute, www.headington-institute.org
- <https://tendacademy.ca/> -- individual and corporate trainings



Moral Injury:

- Volunteers of America (VoA), The Shay Moral Injury Center – <https://www.voa.org/moralinjury-resources>
- Moral Injury in service members: https://ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp

Apps and Service:

- Hospital or clinic resources (Wellness, Education)
- Wellness Apps
- Military Meditation Podcasts
- Personal Trainer, Fitness Apps and Programs
- Food preparation Apps



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Definitions

- **Stress** - a reaction to a situation where a person feels threatened or anxious
- **Burnout** - Burnout describes the physical and emotional exhaustion that workers can experience when they have low job satisfaction and feel powerless and overwhelmed at work. - *Tend Academy*
- **Compassion Fatigue** - the profound emotional and physical exhaustion that helping professionals/caregivers can develop over the course of their career as helpers. - *Figley*

Other Similar Terms

- **Primary Traumatic Stress** - direct experience of trauma where a person is in harm's way
 - Traumatic Stress Reaction
 - Traumatic Stress Disorder
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)** - the result of bearing witness to a traumatic event
- **Vicarious Trauma** - the transformation of our view of the world due to the cumulative exposure to traumatic images and stories - *Matthieu*
- **Moral injury** - a betrayal of “what’s right” by someone in authority or by one’s self in a high-stakes situation - *Shay 2014*

CARING FOR YOURSELF IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULT WORK

Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.

10 things to do each day

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Vary the work that you do.
4. Do some light exercise.
5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Focus on what you did well.
7. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Share a private joke.
9. Pray, meditate or relax.
10. Support a colleague.

**For More Information see your supervisor or visit www.istss.org,
www.proqol.org and www.compassionfatigue.org**

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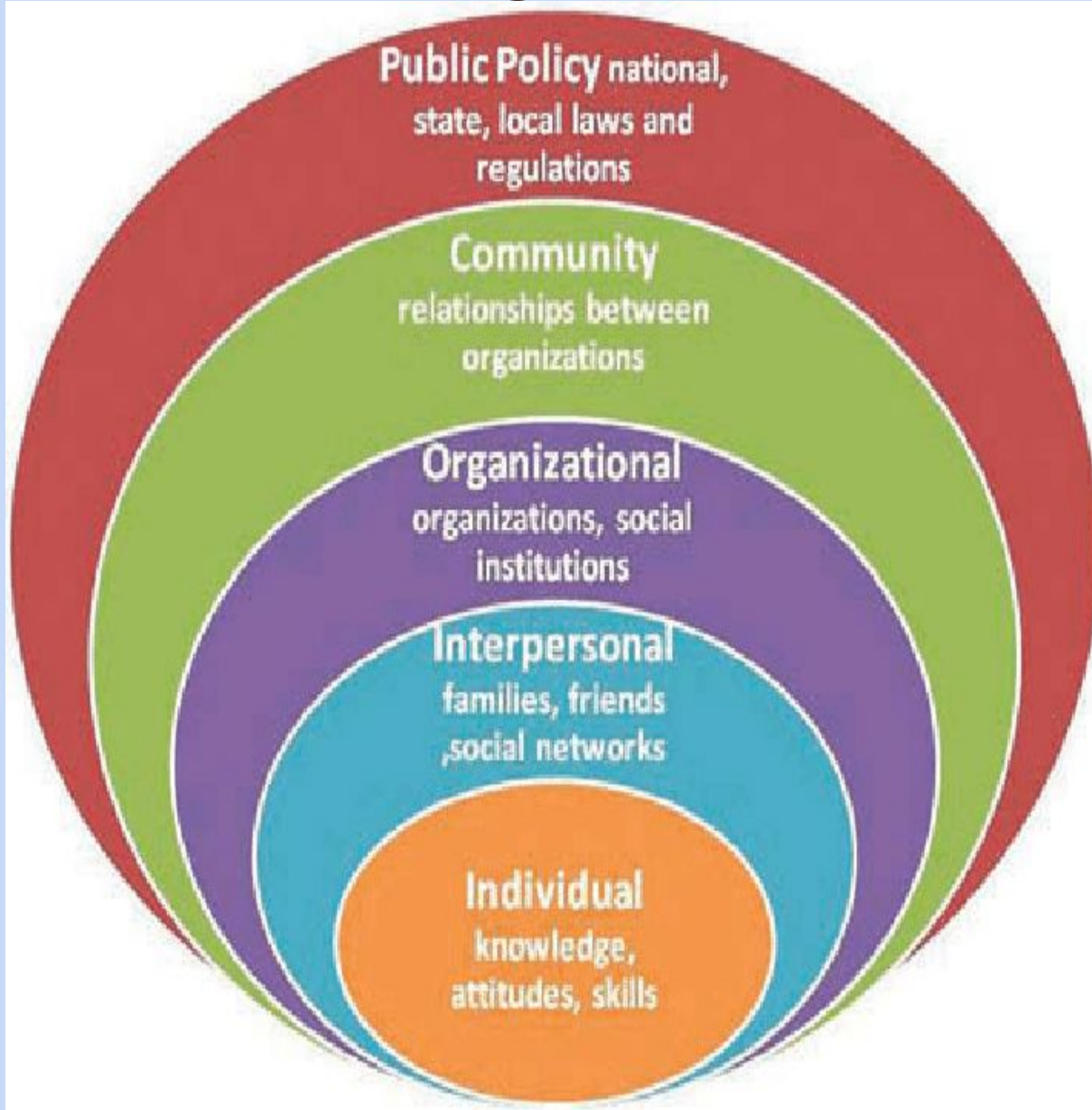
FOCUSING YOUR EMPATHY

Your empathy for others helps you do your job. It is important to take good care of your feelings and thoughts by monitoring how you use them. The most resilient workers are those that know how to turn their feelings to work mode when they go on duty, but off-work mode when they go off duty. This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (feelings switched to work mode) and maximum support while resting (feelings switched off-work mode).

How to become better at switching between Work and Off-Work Modes

1. Make this a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
2. Use images that make you feel safe and protected (work-mode) or connected and cared for (non-work mode) to help you switch.
3. Develop rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.
4. Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.

Socioecological Model



Subsidizing healthy behaviors,
incentivising health,
Supporting professional organizations

Modeling and model sharing
Cross organization collaboration

Patient centered medical home (slotting
longer appointments, scribes)
Leveraging support systems/Superusers
(dictation software, meetings with coders)
Using Templates

Paradigm shifts - *How are you helping?*
Boundary-setting
Communicating expectations
Advocate for self

Medical preparedness, Time Management,
Self-Compassion, Disconnecting/taking
leave, hobbies, yoga, mindfulness, walking