Care for the Caregiver
What Works, What Doesn’t

The Quadruple Aim: Working Together, Achieving Success
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Compassion Fatigue (CF)

- Review definition by Figley (2005)
  - Compassion fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people in distress;
  - An extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it is traumatizing for the helper;

(continued) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhlWddAXSRA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhlWddAXSRA)
– The helper, in contrast to the person(s) being helped, is traumatized or suffers through the helper's own efforts to empathize and be compassionate;
– Often, this leads to poor self care and extreme self sacrifice in the process of helping;
– Together, this leads to compassion fatigue and symptoms similar to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
The Compassion Fatigue Process

1. Exposure to Suffering
2. Empathic Ability
3. Empathic Response
4. Sense of Satisfaction
5. Detachment
6. Residual Compassion Stress
7. Traumatic Memories
8. Prolonged Exposure to Suffering
9. Compassion Fatigue
10. Other Life Demands

Other Life Demands → Prolonged Exposure to Suffering → Residual Compassion Stress → Traumatic Memories → Compassion Fatigue → Empathic Response → Sense of Satisfaction → Empathic Ability → Exposure to Suffering
Compassion Fatigue

- One Provider’s Experience
  - My own work with trauma as a psychologist
    - High School Shooting
    - Sexually Assaulted Detained Immigrants
    - Hurricane Survivors
    - Combat Trauma Survivors
What Doesn’t Work

- Engage in coping strategies that will perpetuate/intensify negative symptoms down the road
  - Drinking alcohol, drugging
  - Excessive spending, gambling
  - Eating unhealthy foods
  - Isolating from others
  - Caring for everybody but yourself
What Works

- Recognize signs of compassion fatigue in yourself
  - Identify ways to mitigate symptoms and/or increase compassion satisfaction
- Recognize signs of compassion fatigue in fellow employees
  - Identify ways to respond to a colleague or subordinate dealing with compassion fatigue or grief
A New Take on an Old Adage

- “First do no harm to Self”
  - Gentry & Figley, 2007

  Created adage after discovering correlation between compassion fatigue and ethical violations
Standards of Self-Care

1. Respect for dignity & worth of self
2. Responsible for self-care
3. Universal right to wellness
4. Physical rest, emotional rest & nourishment
5. Seek, find & remember appreciation from supervisors & clients
6. Make it known that you wish to be recognized for your service

Adapted from “Standards of Self Care for the Practitioner,” Green Cross Foundation, Inc., 2004
More of What Works

- Build Resiliency
  - Building resiliency involves doing two difficult things, simultaneously, in a stressful situation…
    - Self Soothing
    - Self Confronting
Building Resiliency—What Works

- Self-soothing without self-confronting leads to **avoidance**
  - Avoidance may include withdrawing, being demanding, emotionally-driven, eating, substance abuse, etc.

- Self-confronting without self-soothing leads to **beating yourself up**
  - Growing may involve backing off & letting go of control of a situation
Getting Help

- Professional Help
  - Get Professional help when:
    - Your thoughts are overwhelming to the point of being frightened or distressed
    - You think of harming yourself or others
    - You get feedback from family or friends expressing concern about your wellbeing and advising you to seek help
    - You need someone to talk to about your experiences and feelings
Relation to MHS Quadruple Aim

- **Readiness**
  - “ready to deploy…”
  - and “ready to deliver…”

- **Population Health**
  - “…increased resilience…”

- **Experience of Care**
  - “…compassionate…”

- **Per Capita Costs**
  - “…care over time…”
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