

# [Combating compassion fatigue](https://assignbuster.com/combating-compassion-fatigue/)

Health providers go through an emotional crisis known as compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is a kind of a suffering exhaustion that manifests itself as physical, emotional as well as spiritual fatigue. Often, compassion fatigue happens due to the situations experienced by health practitioners and the ache they feel for the clients they attend. One of the important mechanisms of health care is giving care is compassion to the patients. Empathy is one of the essential elements implemented into patient care by the nurses and doctors. Compassion signifies “ an emotion of profound empathy and distress for another who is suffering from bad luck, accompanied by a deep desire to ease the suffering”. Nurses and other health care attendees provide altruistic service, tireless devotion, compassion, and frequently abandon their own needs, which makes them at risk to undergo an emotional dilemma known as compassion fatigue. This essay will be highlighting the warning signs for compassion fatigue.

Warning Signs for Five Major Components of Compassion Fatigue

The five major concepts of compassion fatigue are cognitive, behavioral, emotional, spiritual and somatic. All of these concepts have warning signs and we are going to discuss them below.

First among the five concepts of compassion fatigue is the cognitive concept. It has typical warning signs that the victim should always be aware of, and thus, he/she will be able to find the solution in time. Notably, a victim will lose self-esteem and self worth seeing himself/herself as worthless. According to Mathieu (2012), the health care taker will lose concentration and focus at work, thus making it hard for himself/herself to complete their given tasks. Furthermore, the worker may start performing poorly at work because he/she has lost interest with the job. All these warning signs will be discovered by the workmates because in some cases the affected person may even become absentee from his/her duties.

Secondly, we have the somatic concept. The affected health care provider may start abusing drugs, alcohol or food. When a person develops compassion fatigue, he/she is overwhelmed with stress. Obviously, that would be a catalyst to drug abuse so he/she can feel stress-free. Alcohol is the common substance abused here because it is readily available and makes the person feel high fast. It is usually dangerous because the victim may drink excessively and this may harm to his or her health. Apart from that, a non-alcoholic victim or an individual not addicted to alcohol or drugs may abuse food. The health provider will start eating more food than he or she normally eats.

Third is the behavioral concept. The possible signs are anger and being blemished. Compassion fatigue is a total harm to humans. Notably, Harvey Max Chochinov & Breitbart (2009), state that health practitioners should be aware that anger and blemish might be the signs of compassion fatigue. An affected practitioner will start accusing others of his own blunders at work. He/she may start performing poorly or blunder with his work but will not admit his/her mistake, instead, will blame it on the workmates. This sign comes along with anger, thus emergence of quarrels or even fights at a work place. The victim will blunder on something, blame it on you and if you disagree, his anger might provoke him to start a fight.

Another symptom of compassion fatigue is a health care provider becoming a workaholic. A workaholic is a person who can work for many hours without taking a break or rest. He/shemay not be willing to work like that, but is forced to act like this due to the pressure. The workmates of a person who is suffering from compassion fatigue will clearly notice that he/she is working more than usually. The affected individual might be coming to work the first one and still be the last one to leave. Additionally, he/she will not take a break during this working period; neither will he/she talk to anyone.

Lastly, emotion is also another concept of compassion fatigue. Notably, sleep disturbance is also a sign to compassion fatigue. The person experiences lack of sleep and stays up for long time in the night. This sign just like the others is open and easy for the victim to discover. The lack of sleep may be a result of excessive thinking about different issues. At times, the victim can stay up the whole night and get along with the following day without having a rest.

The Nature of the Problems and Their Causes

All of these problems have their causes. The person affected will decide to do a specific thing depending on what is the problem. Here are some of the problems with their causes.

A health care giver may become hopeless. Hopelessness might come from the condition of the patient who is suffering a lot. This may lead to hopelessness to the personnel too as he/she lacks hope in life by looking at the way others are suffering.

Secondly, exhaustion is common problem among the health providers. Exhaustion is a clear warning sign that the worker is being compassionately fatigue. Todaro-Franceschi (2012), asserts that exhaustion possibly emerges from overworking of the health providers by management. A person working for over twelve hours without taking a break will face both physical and emotional exhaustion.

Thirdly, there is a less ability to be joyful. It is also a common problem and its cause is almost the same as that of hopelessness. A suffering patient who has been ailing for a long period can possibly make the nurse unhappy. Obviously, empathy from the nurse to the patient is the cause for this disorder.

Lastly, the other problem common with compassion fatigue is hypertension. Hypertension is the rise in blood pressure. Among all the other problems, this is the most serious one because it can lead to a sudden death of the health care taker. Hypertension mostly comes from the pressure to make the patient feel/get well. Notably, it is traumatizing to know the life of the person is in your hands, which puts the nurses, and other caretakers under pressure.

Emotional, Physical and Spiritual Needs by the Caregivers

Lack of certain things catalyses the compassion fatigue among the caregivers. However, this issue can be resolved by ensuring they are conforming their emotional, physical and spiritual needs. Here are some of the needs the caregivers need to acquire by themselves.

First, they need someone to talk to and share their problems with.. It is the most important thing as they can be encouraged to move on with their duties and stay focused all through. They also might have experienced some frightening scenes at the work place that make them loose morale. The above said is regarded to as the emotional need.

Secondly, the caregiver also needs to get some time off work. Human beings always feel exhausted after working for a long period. Basing on that, they always need to have some time off from work sso that they can feel relieved. Overworking the health personnel makes it exhausted and gives a feeling of being abused. A week off will help them to relax and resume to another week/day of duty. This emotional need to be relieved is nothing but natural for every person.

Thirdly, the caregivers need to exercise regurarly and have proper nutrition. Figley (2002), obsevers that exercise is ideal for blood circulation, thus the health of the caregiver. Arguably, involvement in physical exercises provides a relief from stress. This need is similar to the need of having time off work.

Coping Strategies

The caregiver takes care of the patients, thus, he/she also needs care. However, he/she is able to undertake some measures of self-care as highlighted below.

Firstly, he/she should look for people to talk to and tell them his/her concerns. Talking to people helps to feel cared for too, as the opponents give their ideas of what one should do and should not do. Additionally, when in such situation company is among the most important thing because loneliness can lead to committing suicide. Having a company enables one to gather different ideas and words of encouragements from different people and apply them to his/her life.

Second step is taking time off from work. Working all through and tending to patients may be traumatizing a times as all you see is just people suffering. Time off from work is important to fight problems of compassion fatigue, which might develop due to tending to the patients for a lot of time and forgetting personal basic needs. Continuing to work may make one to be more fatigue or even develop into more serious and complicated issues. Taking time off is ideal because it gives the person time to recollect himself/herself and ensure he/she gets enough nutrition and engage into physical activities like jogging.

Thirdly, In relation to the later , one should reduce his/her workloads. A time someone does not wish to work for extra hours but it may be the kindness of helping others. While in such condition, the one should learn to say no. A natural reason to refuse work overload is care for one’s health and life at large. Workloads from the others may make situation serious, and result in damaging the health of a caregiver.

Lastly, while in such a condition, one should stimulate his/her brain. Brain stimulation includes doing research and learning new things about health care. Knowledge about new diseases contributes to better professional performance.

In conclusion, compassion fatigue is a kind of suffering exhaustion that manifests itself as physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue. Notably, compassion fatigue was common among nurses in 1950. This problem usually leads to several disorders to the sufferer. The five major concepts of compassion fatigue are cognitive, behavioral, emotional, spiritual and somatic. All of these concepts have warning signs such as drug abuse, having sleepless nights, anger, blemish, hopelessness and hypertension. All of these problems have their causes. The person affected will decide to do a specific thing depending on what is the problem. E. g., exhaustion possibly emerges from overworking of the health providers by management. A person working for over twelve hours without taking a break will face both physical and emotional exhaustion. Despite the fact that the caretaker takes care for the patients, he/she should also put maximum effort to take care of himself when affected by compassion fatigue.