Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue Prevention Among Suicide Prevention Workers

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Objectives and Results

• Objectives
  – 1. Define professional quality of life, compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.
  – 2. Apply information about compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue to suicide prevention work.
  – 3. Formulate plans to increase compassion satisfaction and reduce compassion fatigue in suicide prevention and postvention work.
  – 4. Assess levels of compassion satisfaction and fatigue using the Professional Quality of Life Scale.

Vocabulary

• Compassion Satisfaction
  – Positive aspects of working as a helper
• Compassion Fatigue
  – Negative aspects of working as a helper
• Burnout
  – Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed
• Work-related traumatic stress
  – Primary traumatic stress direct target of event
  – Secondary traumatic exposure to event due to a relationship with the primary person
Professional Quality of Life

**Compassion Satisfaction**
- The positive aspects of helping
- "The good stuff"

**Compassion Fatigue**
- The negative aspects of helping
- "The bad stuff"

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CS-CF Model

- **Professional Quality of Life**
- **Compassion Satisfaction**
- **Compassion Fatigue**
  - **Burnout**
  - **Secondary Trauma**

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Compassion Satisfaction

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

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Compassion Fatigue

- The negative aspects of helping
- The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to
  - Providing care
  - To the system
  - Work with colleagues
  - Beliefs about self
- Burnout
- Work-related 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 is about being afraid

Relationships Are Complex

- Multiple spheres
  - Work environment
  - “People helped” environment
  - Personal environment
- Positive (CS) & negative (CF)
- Altruism CS can override CF
- Compassion Fatigue two parts
  - Worn out (BO) common
  - Frightened, traumatized (STS) rarer but powerful
Complex Relationships

Measuring CS & CF: The **Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)**

- The ProQOL is free
- A 30 item self-report measure of the positive and negative aspects of caring
- The ProQOL measures Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
- Compassion Fatigue has two subscales
  - Burnout
  - Secondary Trauma

Well Established

- The ProQOL is the most widely used measure of the positive and negative aspects of helping in the world
- The ProQOL has proven to be a valid measure of compassion satisfaction and fatigue
- It has been used for over 15 years
- The measure was developed with data from over 3000 people
Easy to Use

• The ProQOL is easy to use
• It can be given individually or in groups
• It can be given online or at an individual computer

Easy to Score

• Full scoring
  – More detailed and specific information but takes longer
  – Better for research or administration
• The simplified scoring
  – Less specific but can be completed quickly and can be intuitively understood
  – Good for training situations

Not a Medical Test

• Helps understand the positive and negative aspects of helping
• Not a “psychological test”
• Not a “medical test”
• Can be viewed as a screening for stress-related health problems
People Bring Themselves

- Suicide Prevention workers include people with all types of education, training and income
- Some workers bring with them histories of difficult lives that may include trauma
- Some people have difficult family, economic, or other personal situations

People Bring Themselves

- People bring a past and a present to anything they do
  - Their schemas and beliefs
  - Their stigma beliefs
  - Their social support systems
    - Positive support
    - Negative support
  - Their history of trauma and illness
  - Their families and close others
  - Their economic situation

Interpreting Scores

- Scores on individual scales tell us about a person’s responses on each of the constructs
- Viewing the combination of scores helps us “paint a picture” of what the person is telling us
- Can be used to track an individual’s CS and CF
Resiliency Planning

- Individual, personally
  - The ProQOL can help you plan where to put your energy to increase our resilience
- Organizational planning
  - Can help organizations find ways to maximize the positive aspects and reduce the negative aspects of helping
- Supportive Supervision
  - The ProQOL can be used as information for discussions

For More Information:
WWW.PROQOL.ORG