

# Compassion Fatigue: “The Cost of Caring”

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# Compassion Fatigue: “The Cost of Caring”

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## BACKGROUND

- Compassion fatigue (CF) is described as “the psycho-emotional distress that originates because of long-term self-sacrifice coupled with prolonged exposure to difficult situations” (Zhang et. al, 2018) <sup>1</sup>.
- “The phenomena of burnout and compassion fatigue are significant for healthcare organizations because of the demonstrated correlations to nurse retention and turnover, patient satisfaction, and patient safety” (Potter, et. al., 2010) <sup>2</sup>.
- Is the consistent population of acutely ill and complex patients being cared for on 6T causing CF?

WORK RELATED	EMOTIONAL:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance or dread of working with certain patients</li> <li>Reduced ability to feel empathy towards patients or families</li> <li>Frequent use of sick days</li> <li>Lack of joyfulness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mood swings</li> <li>Restlessness</li> <li>Irritability</li> <li>Overreactivity</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Excessive use of substances: nicotine, alcohol, illicit drugs</li> <li>Depression</li> <li>Anger and resentment</li> <li>Loss of objectivity</li> <li>Memory issues</li> <li>Poor concentration, focus, and judgment.</li> </ul>
PHYSICAL:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headaches</li> <li>Digestive problems: diarrhea, constipation, upset stomach</li> <li>Muscle tension</li> <li>Sleep disturbances: inability to sleep, insomnia, too much sleep</li> <li>Fatigue</li> <li>Cardiac symptoms: chest pain/pressure, palpitations, tachycardia</li> </ul>	

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## PICO

- P** – Registered nurses on 6T
- I** – Providing education on compassion fatigue symptoms, management, and resources
- C** – No intervention at all
- O** – Awareness about CF and how to combat stress

## EVIDENCE

**The American Nurses Association reported a rise in unacceptably high levels of fatigue in healthcare professionals.**

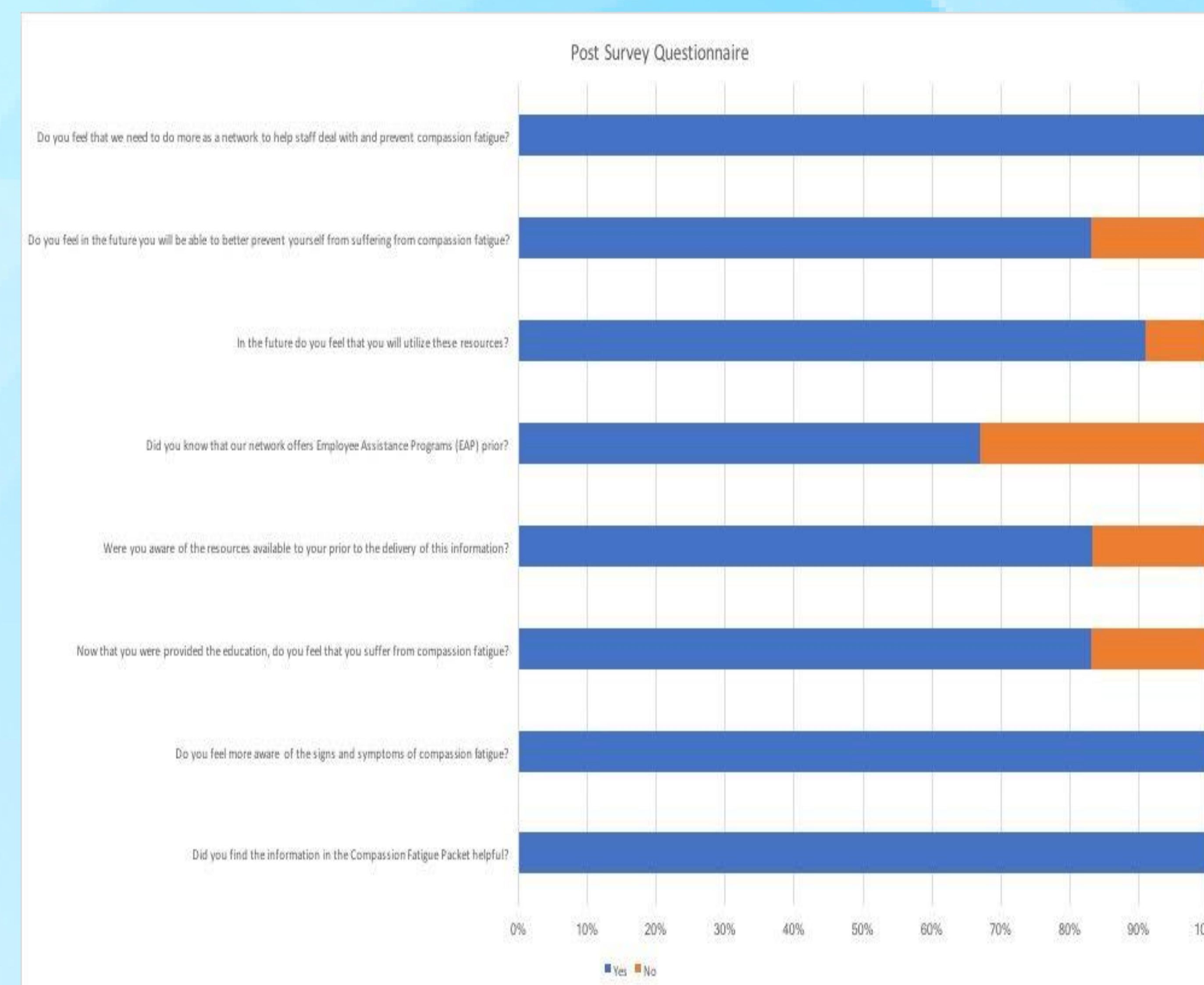
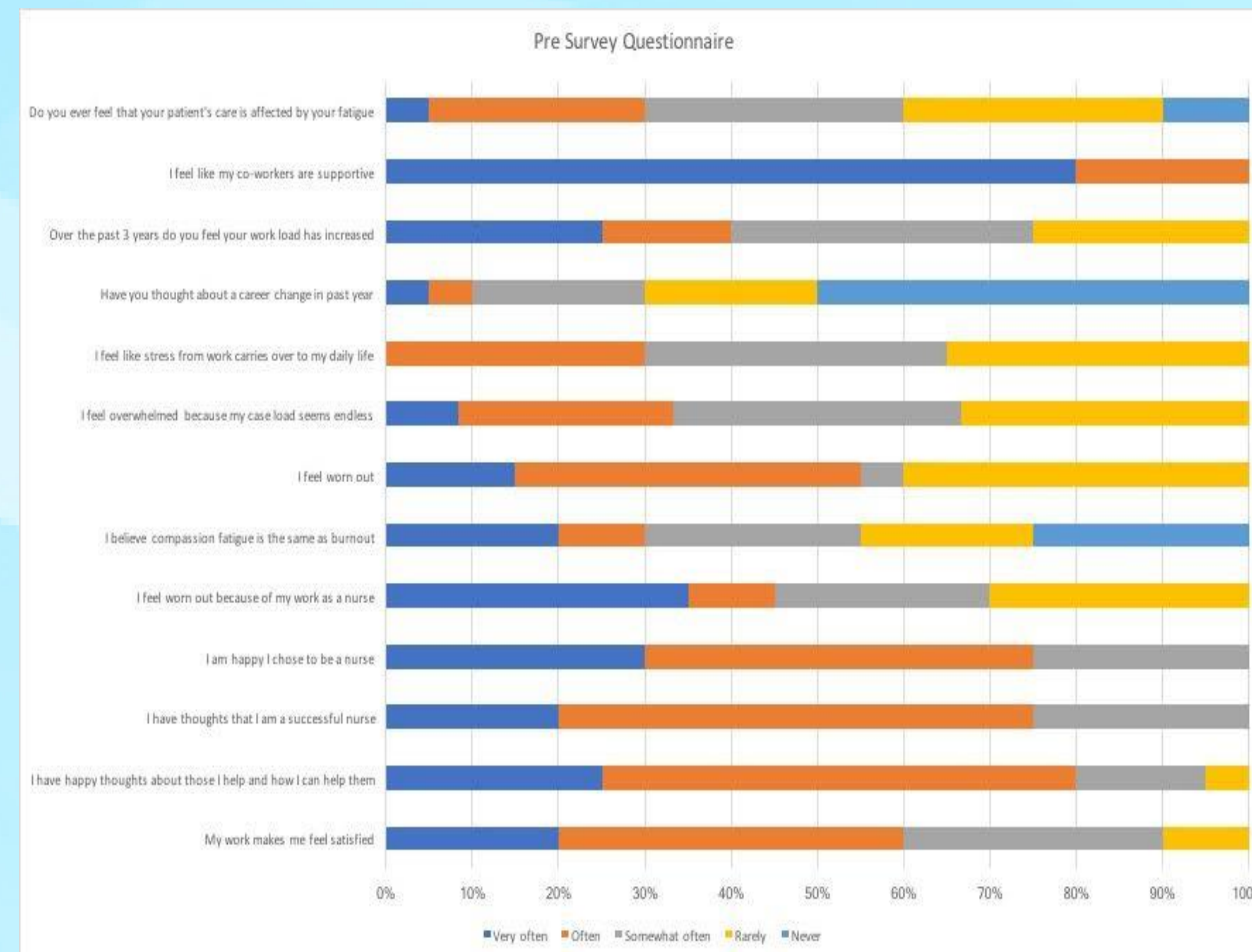
- An analysis on the consequences of CF was done, all participating healthcare providers reported difficulty engaging with their patients in a compassionate or empathetic manner. This adversely affected their job performance and patients' trust (Perregrini, 2019).

**Identifying CF can help reduce nurse turnover.**

- In a study conducted in 2018, a group of nurses attended workshops centered around identifying and managing cf. 3 former PICU and pediatric oncology nurses commented that had they had the workshop in the past and known how to recognize and alleviate symptoms of CF, they would have stayed on their units (Adimando, 2018)

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## OUTCOMES



## IMPLEMENTATION

- Pre surveys provided for RNs to assess current knowledge and awareness of CF and job satisfaction – 20 RNs answered
- Bulletin boards in staff areas utilized to display information on preventative measures well as resources to combat compassion fatigue, such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), self care strategies/activities, and education on compassion fatigue
- Post surveys were provided following implementation after 2 weeks to assess if intervention helped raise awareness – 17 RNs answered

## NEXT STEPS

- Utilize the EAP to decrease stress caused by or made worse by work
- Utilize self-care strategies to manage stress and compassion fatigue
- Continue to provide education on compassion fatigue symptoms and management and spread awareness on how to treat it
- Discuss CF at the next staff meeting to encourage continued review of education and use of resources

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Zhang, Y., Han, W., Qin, W., Yin, H., Zhang, C., Kong, C., & Wang, Y. (2018). Extent of compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue and burnout in nursing: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 26(7), 810-819. doi:10.1111/jonm.12589

<sup>2</sup>Potter, P., Divanbeigi, J., Berger J., Norris, L., & Olsen, S.. (2010). Compassion fatigue and burnout: Prevalence among oncology nurses. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 14(5), E56.

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