

Combating Compassion Fatigue: An Appreciative Pivot to the Virtual Classroom in a New Educational World

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Abstract

In 2020, education pivoted the entirety of teaching to the world of digital, and institutions braced for budgetary shortfalls. Faculty embraced new technology to continue facilitating quality learning, meet community-identified needs, and further students' professional identity development. Appreciative educators chose to innovatively adapt and continue the work within new parameters. In response, the authors created a five-week course entitled, Building Compassion Satisfaction: Self-Honoring, Meaning Making, and Community. The university distance-learning system was augmented by our webinar platform designed to open the newly created interactive and experiential graduate level course to include professional learners and community members. This redesign resulted in 180 highly satisfied learners from diverse settings: graduate students, professional learners working in long term support services, and community members as lifelong learners. Combining all learners aimed to normalize the experience of compassion fatigue, build belongingness, and strengthen strengths across learner groups.

Keywords

compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, positive pivot, COVID-19, gerontology

During times of increased stress and crisis, people, both individually and collectively, often fail to take stock, reflect, evaluate, and, in general, fail to share valuable specifics of how transitions and new ways of operating come to be (Lencioni, 2002). This paper offers a reflective review of one educational team's positive pivot as we turned shared trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic into an opportunity to build community, to facilitate quality learning, meet community-identified needs, and advance professional identity development for both professionals and emerging professionals in our eldercare workforce.

Dewart and colleagues (2020) noted that the COVID-19 health crisis has disrupted universities and academic institutions. Furthermore, the pandemic has impacted all systems and communities, in addition to frontline staff, health professionals, and clinical providers (Dewart et al., 2020). In response early in 2020, academic and continuing professional education transitioned entirely to digital formats. College and university faculty were called to respond by creating additional courses and adapting technology in order to meet student matriculation timelines, learning needs, and career goals (Dempsey et al., 2021). Simultaneously, continuing education for health professionals similarly pivoted to support the workforce. During a time when many things seemed more challenging, our intent was to efficiently bridge learning platforms and create a positive and inclusive space that was accessible, welcoming, familiar, and engaging.

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The creation of a new online graduate-level elective course entitled, “Building Compassion Satisfaction: Self-Honoring, Meaning Making, and Community” offered through the Department of Gerontology at Virginia Commonwealth University, presented an opportunity to address new challenges, growing concerns about compassion fatigue, and burnout among professionals in the healthcare workforce. Furthermore, through the course emerging professionals were prepared for the potentiality of compassion fatigue subsequent to the emotional labor of the work (Figley, 1995).

Through this pivot, the creation and delivery of this virtual course offered an opportunity to simultaneously meet multiple learner needs by blending graduate students, professionals working in the long-term services and supports (LTSS) sector, and community members with an interest in lifelong learning. In addition to skill building, the course prioritized the mental health of our current and future eldercare workforce. The topic of compassion satisfaction was selected in response to growing examples in our own work of increased observations of compassion fatigue among graduate students, professionals, and community members. By integrating our existing university-based on-line learning system and our continuing education webinar platform, we expanded our reach. An appreciative approach to building compassion satisfaction offered a strengths-based approach to creating belongingness and connectivity while normalizing the experience of compassion fatigue and building compassion satisfaction among graduate students, professionals, and community members within this time of shared stress, suffering, and loss.

Background: Foundations of the Course

Developing a Common Language Around Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue, a term originally coined by Joinson (1992), refers to nurses who expressed exhaustion due to repeated hospital emergencies and, thereafter, has been extensively discussed by Figley (1995). An exhaustive review of the research literature revealed numerous definitions, explanations, approaches, and measures. However, in preparation for this course and listening to our professional community and our community of students, we found that although the experience of the consequences of caring appeared to be universal, many among our professional and pre-professional workforce had never been introduced to concepts related to compassion fatigue or received training in its prevention.

Our exploration revealed a universal experience of fatigue yet limited skills in its prevention. Although the demands and effects of emotional labor are inherent to the roles of health and human services professionals (Anderson & Gaugler, 2007; Franzosa et al., 2018; Showalter, 2010;), the stressors related to emotional labor and grief exposure, for example, are not routinely identified or addressed among all segments of the health care workforce (Anderson & Gaugler, 2007; Franzosa et al., 2018). As helping professionals and educators, we not only have the ethical imperative of duty to self (Abramson, 2021), we also have a special professional ethic to our colleagues, interns, families, and students to make aware and best prepare colleagues and kindred for the negative consequences of caring (Figley, 1995).

For the purposes of this course, we elected to use Figley’s (1995) definition: “Compassion fatigue is defined as a state of exhaustion and dysfunction — biologically, psychologically, and socially — as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress and all that it evokes” (p. 253). Additionally, we used a multidimensional model developed by Nolte and colleagues (2017) to frame the course modules. Nolte’s theoretical model is intended to be used as a guide for clinical practice, practice policies, and future research to mitigate the development of compassion fatigue. In their metasynthesis with nurses, Nolte et al. (2017) coalesced the lengthy lists of potential physical, emotional, and triggering

symptoms into four themes related to compassion fatigue. The themes included: physical (“just plain worn out”) and emotional symptoms (“walking on a tightrope”), triggering factors (“an unbearable weight on shoulders” and “alone in a crowded room”), and measures to overcome/prevent (“who has my back?”). Each theme expressed the felt and debilitating dysfunction of the negative consequences of caring that, if untended, can result in compassion fatigue.

Frequently discussed together, *burnout* and *secondary traumatic stress* (STS) are related to compassion fatigue; both are precursors and represent different pathways to compassion fatigue. *Burnout* is the experience of demands outweighing resources (Gentry, 2010) and arises when attempts to meet care-related goals are unsuccessful, resulting in frustration, a sense of loss of control, and diminished morale (Stamm, 2010; Valent, 2002). Alternatively, *STS* arises when individuals feel that they have no more capacity to carry another’s stress or trauma (Nolte et al., 2017). Furthermore, STS results when an individual cannot rescue or save someone from harm and results in guilt and distress (Valent, 2002). Burnout and STS may singly or in combination lead to compassion fatigue, if the symptoms are not mediated through the presence of compassion satisfaction. *Compassion satisfaction* can be expressed as the joy, purpose, and meaning derived from one’s work of caring (Flarity et al., 2016). In other words, compassion satisfaction is about connecting and remaining connected to one’s own unique purpose or “Big Why” as helping professionals, carers or care-givers.

Compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue may occur simultaneously and can be seen as the positive and negative consequences of caring (Stamm, 2010). Because of the important mediating role of compassion satisfaction in reducing or preventing compassion fatigue, much of the literature focuses on building resilience, self-efficacy, and meaning-making as essential to the transformation from negative to positive aspects of caring (Cocker & Joss, 2016; Stamm, 2010). *Resiliency* is composed of an individual’s strengths and resources, both internal and external protective factors that help a person to recover from, or succeed despite adverse circumstances (Gentry et al., 2010).

The Multidimensional Nature and Impact of Compassion Fatigue

In these uncertain times, the consequences of caring are being further magnified when encumbered by the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bethune, 2021). Initially felt as a risk of illness and death, the subsequent waves of the pandemic bring accompanying psychic trauma, mental illness, economic injury, and burnout across communities (Babian, 2020). Figley (2012) stated, “The most insidious aspect of compassion fatigue is that it attacks the very core of what brings helpers into this work: their empathy and compassion for others” (p.4). Although the individual level impacts can be personally devastating, the ripple effects of compassion fatigue can be equally stymying both professionally and organizationally. The pathways, symptoms, and triggering factors of compassion fatigue are multidimensional, extending beyond the levels of a person’s physical and emotional symptoms. Consequently, compassion fatigue results in relational, professional, and organizational ramifications, not to mention the societal impact of the mental health cascade of myriad unaddressed stressors including potentially deaths of despair (Cocker & Joss, 2016; Nolte et al., 2017; Woolf & Shoemaker, 2019).

Compassion fatigue may also impact patient safety, result in accidents, and poor-quality care (Cocker & Joss, 2016). Furthermore, it may also result in organizational strains including increased costs due to turnover, absenteeism, or injury (Nolte et al., 2017). Cocker and Joss (2016) stressed, “By reducing the incidence of compassion fatigue, future cases of depression and anxiety could be prevented, thus reducing the related health and economic

consequences of these conditions” (p. 13).

Exploring Compassion Fatigue through an Appreciative Lens

An *appreciative mindset* emphasizes seeking and strengthening learners’ positive aspects, co-creation and collaboration of teaching and learning, building on past and present experiences to support learners’ becoming their best selves (Bloom et al., 2008, Bloom et al., 2013). The co-learning environment established through positive regard and engagement supports the learners’ progression toward dreams and goals (Bloom et al., 2013). Narrative practice provides linkages across past, present, and future, creating scaffolding and self-efficacy for future hopes and dreams. As appreciative educators, the curriculum and course design were co-created through collaboration among our curriculum team, and the teaching-learning environment was intentionally designed to create positive interactive spaces inside and outside the “classroom” with an eye toward creating our best *future possible selves* (Bloom et al., 2013; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Appreciation Among the Design Team

Education should be a co-learning experience, through which all learn together and challenge each other to become their best possible selves. This co-learning approach applies to learners and instructors alike (Bloom et al., 2013). As gerontologists, we also apply a lifespan, bio-psycho-social-spiritual (BPSS) approach, in which we engage the multidimensional development of the whole person (Baltes, 1987). Similarly, we uphold a strengths-based approach, rejecting a deficit-based, single story representation of longevity as decline. The multidimensional nature of compassion fatigue required a team-based approach to course design and delivery. Likewise, in order for the course to have a cohesive flow, the logistics of delivery needed to embrace an appreciative approach. The multidimensional nature of the risk factors, prevention, and support well recognized around compassion fatigue required an aptly skilled and diverse course design and instructional team.

We wanted the course to address and create belonging for a diverse population of learners. Consequently, we leaned on our long-time community and continuing education webinar platform facilitator and technical consultant (author 4) to design engaging materials and guide the creation of interactive modules using polling, Q&A, and chat features. Also, the creation of marketing and registration materials and personalized behind the scenes support for learners reinforced the appreciative approach beyond the basic logistics of course design and delivery.

A nearly two-decade long partnership of developing and delivering continuing education enabled nimble responsiveness. Our platform facilitator and technical consultant (author 4) complemented the team with their sequence and technical reasoning. They consistently brought structure to ideas and theory, both technically and programmatically, and operationalized what is normally second nature in face-to-face presentations, to an online platform. This existing partnership was the primary mode by which this pivot to bridging classroom and community was made possible. The authors have learned, as other researchers have noted, that replicating a sense of community and engagement experienced in face-to-face learning can be daunting for less practiced online educators (Schroeder et al., 2021). Quickly blending the two systems forced an intentional process review at the conclusion of the course.

Additionally, an educational gerontologist (author 3) and a narrative gerontologist (author 2) were engaged as part of the instructional team, in order to address the layered and multi-contextual nature of compassion fatigue (Individual, Professional, Team, Organization, Community). The educational gerontologist (author 3), or the dot connector, offered that

learners consider existing efforts in the community and the language and theoretical framework from other disciplines. The narrative gerontologist (author 2) introduced learners to terms and concepts designed to explore storytelling, story listening, and story co-creation as skills that can deepen connection, foster a sense of belonging, and support compassion satisfaction.

Phases of Appreciative Education

Appreciative Education (AE) phases were threaded throughout the five learning modules. This process is described below and presented as well in the subsequent tables.

Disarm, described as the use of positive, active, and attentive listening along with questioning strategies aimed at building trust and rapport with learners (Bloom et al., 2008) is a continual process of engagement and re-engagement, thus each module began with a *narrative practice* called *mind dump or parking lot* (see description below). These practices represented elements of the disarm and discover phases. Because learners had the opportunity to participate in the series either in whole or in part, synchronously and asynchronously, dropping in anywhere along the way, employing the disarm phase was essential to create a sense of familiarity and belongingness for all learners throughout the entirety of the course. Similarly, opportunities for discovery were threaded throughout the sessions. The *Discover phase* aims to connect learners with their own strengths, skills, and past successes (Bloom et al., 2008) and provide opportunities to compare shared experiences across learners in a safe and non-threatening environment. Disarm and discover provided common elements throughout the series. The employment of the discover phase aimed to establish a common language for all learners during each session by way of brief content review at the beginning of each module and opportunities for learners to connect to past and present experiences. In this way, we worked to foster a sense of belonging and shared understanding, creating both a welcoming and compassionate climate and a level playing field for all attendees.

The *dream* phase asks learners to imagine what might be their dream or vision for themselves and their future (Bloom et al., 2008). Throughout the modules, learners were invited to dream. They shared stories about their own compassion satisfaction and feelings of meaning and purpose that inspired themselves and other learners. Learners were invited to consider their dream team or ideal social network that would support their own compassion satisfaction. They imagined their own best formula for their big six wellness practices. Each were opportunities to build on past and current experiences and connect with the research literature for designing their own reality. All learners also participated in Stop. Start. Continue. activities through which they carried their dreams forward into the *design* and *deliver* phases. In the *design* phase, learners were encouraged to strengthen their existing strengths and create action plans following through on their dreams (Bloom et al., 2008). As learners shared their plans for the *deliver* phase, or intentions for carrying out their designs, learners and instructors came together in support and encouragement. As learners shared their designs and delivery plans, we in turn discovered that this was an iterative process and that each week the dream, discover, design, and deliver phases continued to evolve and inform learners' dreams and goals to build their compassion satisfaction. Learners were inspired by the learning and sharing of their classmates, truly demonstrating what Kuh and colleagues (2005) refer to as *positive restlessness*, a hallmark of the *don't settle* phase. The co-learning environment prompted a shared momentum among learners to continue to reach for their best selves.

Positive and Intentional Course Delivery

Creating the course content was only the first step in the journey. Co-mingling our

learners was the true pivot. The course was initially envisioned as a one-credit graduate level course. However, as we studied the topic and listened to our community, our design team experienced our own discovery requiring a course re-design. It became apparent that the fatigue and weight of the conditions of care provision during the pandemic were taking a toll across the constellation of care. In addition, we felt the call to heed Figley's (1995) urging to better prepare pre-professionals for the consequences of care. What better way to do this than to normalize the shared experience of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction than to join into a co-learning environment?

The Learners

We aimed to provide an educational experience simultaneously responsive to the specific learning needs of graduate students, professionals in the LTSS workforce, and community members. In every educational endeavor, we want all learners to feel positively connected, an aim potentially undermined by added "social" distance and separation relative to the COVID-19 public health crisis. Additionally, the pandemic introduced unexpected challenges to an already depleted LTSS workforce such as increased service demands, decreased resources, and lack of peer support. These challenges prompted a series of questions. How do we effectively engage learners? How do we create belonging in a way that bridges the classroom and the broader community? In an environment defined by pandemic fatigue, other COVID-related stressors, and heightened social unrest, how might we further develop professional identity among professionals and pre-professionals? To achieve our aim we implemented a three-pronged approach: (1) unite learners from among diverse roles, organizations, and backgrounds together around common experiences; (2) create connection through narrative (Charon et al., 2017); and (3) strengthen strengths through appreciative skill building.

Given the stretched capacity of current learners, we wanted to create a climate of compassion in this virtual course so that each learner could experience a sense of belonging. Normalizing the experience of compassion fatigue and connecting with one's compassion satisfaction were key to supporting our learners' career commitments and professional identity development. Beginning from a strengths-based, appreciative stance created a stronger learning climate for learners of all kinds.

Designing a Disarming Learning Space

Creating an intentional and positive environment begins with the invitation to learn; therefore, it was essential that we minimize additional barriers for our existing learners. For example, graduate students, professionals, and community members typically accessed courses through two different technology platforms. All learners were invited to register and complete the course in the platform most familiar to them. Current graduate students were invited to learn through the existing university online platform, while professionals and community members joined through the existing continuing education webinar platform. Our course design team then seamlessly blended the two platforms to create a shared learning space. By augmenting the existing university distance-learning system with the continuing education webinar platform, we were able to bridge graduate students, professionals, and community members to deliver an interactive and experiential course to a wider community.

Graduate students were invited to enroll in the course as usual through our university eservices system. Students were then added to our Blackboard course where the course syllabus, readings, and assignments were shared. Student learners were automatically enrolled each of the five sessions; the link was also shared on their Blackboard course announcements.

For professionals and community members, a marketing flyer was created with a registration link, and the course was marketed across our existing Community and Continuing Education (CCE) email list and various social media platforms. Professionals and community members registered using the registration link and received a reminder the day of the session. The marketing message was adjusted according to our targeted audience while emphasizing the timeliness of the topic during the pandemic and the equally timely intrinsic benefits to the attendee.

The five weekly virtual seminars were hosted live (synchronously) and then archived to be used both for future synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Student, professional, and community learners could either participate in the live sessions or view the archived webinars, providing inclusive, learner-centered participation. For graduate students enrolled in the course, links to the webinars were posted in their on-line platform. For professionals and community members, the webinars were posted on the existing continuing education webinar platform. All learners had the opportunity to receive certificates of completion for this course, although not all requested one. Due to the mixed-learner nature of our group, professional learners were most interested in receiving certificates of completion as they applied toward employment related continuing education. Graduate student learners, who were receiving course credit, and community learners were less interested in receiving certificates of attendance. Graduate students submitted reflection assignments following each module as part of their course requirements.

Designing Curricular Content: Building Compassion Satisfaction Through an Appreciative Lens

Before summarizing lessons learned, we next present some of the key elements of the course design including the course description and a summary of course modules. Because one aim of the course was to create a sense of belonging and community, we also will describe teaching tools intended to cultivate unity and connection among the three different types of learners: graduate students, professional learners, and community members.

Course Description

Framing the course around the model presented by Nolte and colleagues (2017) enabled our team to develop modules addressing the multidimensionality of both risk of compassion fatigue and building compassion satisfaction: risk factors, signs and symptoms, triggering factors, and measures to overcome and prevent compassion fatigue across the five modules. All learners received the same course description:

The purpose of this seminar course is to explore compassion fatigue including definitions, multidimensional risk factors, and interventions currently discussed in the literature. We will take a strengths-based approach to developing practices to build compassion satisfaction in response to personal, professional, and organizational risk factors. An appreciative process of discover, dream, design, and deliver will serve as a lens for this course.

Course Modules

Creating a familiar agenda across each of the five modules enabled learners to know what to expect and allowed for deeper exploration into concepts and research. Anticipating a familiar path forward is a strategy that was used in the course to disarm learners by creating a sense of safety, comfort, and belonging in the virtual classroom. Each module followed a similar flow and format, consisting of a brief welcome and reminder of the course description and goals, an opening narrative practice to disarm and engage, a module description, interactive polling, module content, reflective exercises, practice pauses, and discussion. The

module descriptions presented at the beginning of each session reminded learners of the overarching purpose of the course and introduced the module purpose and learning objectives for each module. Any necessary framing, instructor introductions, and definitions were also provided.

At the beginning of the course, we introduced core gerontological values and principles in order to ground the series. In Module 1, for example, we reviewed our department's diversity and inclusion statement, a summary of Baltes's Life Span Perspective (1987), and the components of person-centered caring, all hallmarks for a gerontological approach. Module 1 also reinforced a shared common language related to compassion fatigue as well as the signs, symptoms, and triggering factors. Across the course, heavy emphasis was placed on a model developed by Nolte and colleagues (2017) from a metasynthesis of nurses. This model was used throughout the series to synthesize the literature for the learners. Table 1 outlines the module summary, agenda, and opportunities for discussion offered throughout the five-module series. Notably, the modules build on one another, with introductions and conclusions that create an intentional sequence. In addition, the modules can each be used as mini-lessons in other settings; the first module, in particular, serves as a general introduction and overview of the topic.

Teaching Tools

Several teaching tools were integrated in this effort to build community and a sense of belonging, and to create an interactive learning environment. The tools are described below and include parking lot/mind top, interactive polling, practice pauses, and reading and reflection assignments (for graduate students).

Table 1. *Building Compassion Satisfaction: Self-Honoring, Meaning Making, and Community Course Modules*

Module 1. Compassion Fatigue: What is it? What does it look like? Why does it matter?		
Summary	Agenda	Discussion
Module 1: Compassion Fatigue: What is it? What does it look like? Why does it matter?	Disarm & Engage: Parking Lot / Mind Dump (narrative practice) Welcome & Stage Setting Gerontological Approach and Values Compassion Fatigue: What is it? What does it look like? Discover: Practice Pause: Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL). Q&A Wrap up and, thank yous & invitation to attend Module 2.	Learners were invited to post questions in the chat throughout the session. Comments and questions were answered and shared among the learning community. Instructors also sorted the comments for themes that might suggest future courses. Learners were actively engaged throughout the modules through discovery in co-learning and co-creation of course discussion and content.

Module 2. Compassion Fatigue: Risk Factors: Personal, Organizational, & Societal		
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Agenda</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
<p>Compassion Fatigue: Why does it matter? In this segment, we explored existing literature regarding the individual, organizational, and societal impact of compassion fatigue. The importance of impact of compassion fatigue research was also described.</p>	<p>Disarm & Engage: Parking Lot / Mind Dump (narrative practice)</p> <p>Welcome & Review: The module opened with a brief welcome and reminder of the course description.</p> <p>Discover: Interactive Polling (see Table 2)</p> <p>Compassion Fatigue: Risk Factors: Personal, Organizational, Societal. Multidimensional risk factors were framed within the context provided in Module 1, linking to individual PROQOL.</p> <p>Discover: Practice Pause</p> <p>Compassion Fatigue: An Appreciative Approach to Building Compassion Satisfaction.</p> <p>4D Approach: Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver. Attendees were introduced to the 4D Approach as we began to move into the steps to building compassion satisfaction.</p> <p>Wrap up, thank yous, & invitation to attend Module 3.</p>	<p>What compassion satisfaction means to us. Comments and questions were shared (in chat), answered and noted for linking future sessions (e.g. grief and loss).</p> <p>Practice Pause: The PROQOL instrument was again shared and attendees were asked to reflect back on their responses in relation to Module 2 material.</p>
Module 3. Building Compassion Satisfaction: Honoring Self through Awareness & Connection		
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Agenda</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
<p>Module 3 expanded on attendees' unique experiences of compassion satisfaction, co-creation and building skills in awareness and connection in order to maintain compassion satisfaction and harmonize with compassion fatigue. Creating one's team of supporters and a formula for daily basic wellness practices were emphasized.</p>	<p>Disarm & Engage: Parking Lot / Mind Dump (narrative practice)</p> <p>Welcome & review of goals Module 3 opened with a brief welcome and reminder of the course description. Reminding and reconnecting with one's big why is essential to building compassion satisfaction and continuing along the path of one's professional identity development. <i>Discover to</i></p>	<p>What compassion satisfaction means to us. Attendee responses to the question "What does compassion satisfaction mean to YOU?" were shared on the screen for review and reflection (co-creation).</p> <p>Deliver: Stop. Start. Continue Attendees were invited to share something that they</p>

	<p><i>reconnect with sense of meaning, joy, and purpose.</i></p> <p>Discover: Practice Pause: Reflection Attendee responses to the question “What does compassion satisfaction mean to YOU?” were shared on the screen for review and reflection.</p> <p>With an emphasis on strengthening existing strengths, Module 3 focused on several skill building activities:</p> <p>Discover & Dream: Building your village (or DREAM team) of support, personally and professionally. Design: Design a formula. Attendees were asked to design their own daily self-honoring practices focused on the big six basic wellness practices (sleep/rest, diet/nutrition, Elimination - of toxins & stress, hygiene, exercise/mobility, and social/emotional engagement).</p> <p>Design: Practice Pause: Design your own self honoring formula</p> <p>Wrap up, thank yous, & invitation to attend Module 4.</p>	<p>would Stop, Start, or Continue in the next week to Deliver on their plans to build Compassion Satisfaction.</p> <p>Deliver: Stop. Start. Continue Attendees were invited to share something that they would Stop, Start, or Continue in the next week to Deliver on their plans to build compassion satisfaction.</p>
<p>Module 4. Building Compassion Satisfaction: Honoring the Work through Meaning and Purpose</p>		
<p><i>Summary</i></p>	<p><i>Agenda</i></p>	<p><i>Discussion</i></p>
<p>Module 4 emphasized the essential nature of connecting with our own sense of meaning and purpose as the foundation of building compassion satisfaction. Attendees were invited to explore their own sense of purpose and how they build compassion satisfaction</p>	<p>Disarm & Engage: Parking Lot / Mind Dump (narrative practice) Welcome & Review of Goals</p> <p>Discover: Interactive poll (see Table 2)</p> <p>Discover: Attendees responses were reviewed and clarified with content from previous modules.</p> <p>Discover, Design, & Deliver: Practice Pause: What’s your Flow formula? Stop. Start. Continue</p>	<p>Deliver: Stop. Start. Continue: Attendees were invited to share something that they could Stop, Start, or Continue in the next week to Deliver on their plans to build compassion satisfaction.</p>

	Wrap up, thank yous & invitation to attend Module 5.	
Module 5. Building Compassion Satisfaction: Honoring Others by Building Appreciative and Compassionate Communities		
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Agenda</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
<p>Module 5 opened with a brief welcome and reminder of the course description and an introduction of the Module 5 instructors.</p> <p>Expanding on Lencioni's five functions of a team, Author 3 shared team trust and emphasized building trust as the first building block of his approach to six functions of a team. Author 2 emphasized the critical role of story in each of our lives and in a person-centered approach to care. Key concepts from narrative gerontology such as were presented as practical elements of offering care to ourselves, our peers, and the people we serve.</p>	<p>Disarm & Engage: Parking Lot / Mind Dump (narrative practice)</p> <p>Welcome & Review:</p> <p>Discover: Interactive Polling (see Table 2)</p> <p>Discover: Attendees responses were reviewed and clarified with content from previous modules.</p> <p>Discover & Design, Deliver, & Don't settle: Practice Pause: Deliver! Stop. Start. Continue.</p> <p>Wrap up and thank yous.</p>	<p>Practice Pause: What do compassionate communities look like to you?</p> <p>Discussion: 4Ds Appreciative approach to building compassion satisfaction</p> <p>Deliver: Stop. Start. Continue: Attendees were invited to share something that they could stop, start, or continue in the next week to deliver on their plans to build compassion satisfaction.</p>

Parking Lot/Mind Dump

We opened each session with a narrative practice to bring us into the space, to reflect, and remind the class of our reasons for coming together to create a climate of compassion. This activity, called Parking Lot / Mind Dump, assisted learners with transitioning into the learning environment. The instructions for this activity are as follows:

Before we get started, please take out a piece of paper. Draw a line down the center. On the left side, write Parking Lot. On the right side, write Be Here Now. On the Parking Lot side, list out the things swirling in your mind that you need to remember to do but not right now (i.e. shopping list, friends to reach out to). On the Be Here Now side, write note what is on your mind about tonight's class (i.e. topics of interest, questions you have, ideas to share). Take this moment to intentionally transition into our learning space.

Interactive Polling

Interactive polling was used throughout the course in order to engage learners and to offer an opportunity for content review and refreshers. The interactive polling served as not only a way to keep participants engaged, but it also ensured that learning objectives were met. All learners were also invited to confidentially share personal reflections and experiences via the chat function, which was only visible to the instructor, who then confidentially shared chat insights with the course learning community. The approach of

maintaining confidentiality while sharing vulnerability was a strength of the pivot over face-to-face learning. In face-to-face classrooms, some learners may prefer to remain invisible in a crowd and decline to share sensitive and vulnerable information, hence perpetuating fatigue and separation. Table 2 illustrates examples of interactive polling exercises.

Table 2. *Interactive Polling Examples*

Module	Interactive Polling Questions	Polling Responses
Module 1	n/a	
Module 2	Statement 1: Compassion fatigue & burnout are two names for the same thing? Statement 2: Compassion fatigue and Compassion satisfaction cannot be experienced together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes, they are synonymous ● <i>No, they are different</i> ● True ● <i>False</i> ● Not sure
Module 3	n/a	
Module 4	Statement 1: Compassion fatigue is caused by lack of resources in our environment. Statement 2: Nolte’s research recommends a mix of self-care strategies and support from others and our environment to reduce compassion fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● True ● False ● <i>Somewhat</i> ● <i>True</i> ● False ● Not sure
Module 5	Statement 1: According to the research we have reviewed in our discovery phase, which seems more true to you: Statement 2: Based on what we learned last week about flow strategy, which seems more true:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>We build resilience through Attention and Intention</i> ● We build resilience through Distraction and Avoidance ● Not sure ● Flow just happens and is not at all under our control ● <i>We can create opportunities to drop into flow on purpose with purpose</i> ● Not sure

Practice Pauses

Practice pauses were periods of time in each session dedicated for learners to experiment on their own with an idea, tool, or resource introduced in that module’s content. During practice pauses, learners were invited to work on their own for a set period of time to complete a specific activity. At the end of the allotted time, the instructor reconvened learners and facilitated a reflective discussion about the activity. For example, attendees were invited

into a practice pause to complete the PROQOL (Stamm, 2010) to explore positive and negative aspects of caring and then asked to share reflections on the PROQOL in the chat. Practice pauses such as this one offered learners time to incorporate module material and to reflect on their own practices and experiences.

Reading & Reflection Assignments

The webinars, either live (synchronous) or viewed as recordings (asynchronously), served as lecture content for all learners. For professional learners and community members, handouts and slide decks were included on the webinar site.

For graduate students, additional course readings, resources, and assignments were shared throughout the semester on the student Blackboard section. These readings consisted of a collection of research articles to supplement the seminar content. Graduate students were invited to participate in discussion on the course Blackboard site, in which they were encouraged to share what they had learned and how course content was relative to their professional and personal lives. Students were invited to share articles and resources they found from their own research into the compassion fatigue literature. These opportunities were not part of the course grade. Regarding graded assignments, each week enrolled graduate students either attended the seminar or watched the recorded seminar, then submitted a reflection (2-3 pages). As a final reflection assignment, students were asked to submit a final culminating reflection paper (5-7 pages) using a What? So What? Now What? framework reflecting on course learning.

Lessons Learned: Implications for Practice

Despite having leveraged existing platforms, partnerships, and expertise, the pivot struggled behind the scenes, in some ways. Welleford et al. (2014) stated that during design, development, and implementation of a course, continual reflection is essential. Because of a conscientious process of sense making (Welleford et al., 2014), which continues even today, the design team has learned how to improve upon this success in the future. Below, we discuss four of the lessons learned from this pivot related to continuous improvement, gauging learner satisfaction, teaching what you need to learn, and student recruitment.

1. Continuous Improvement Process. Ongoing, continuous improvement is considered standard practice in learner-centered instruction, yet it can be a heavy lift during a pivot when much already is in flux. Planning in additional time for flexibility of content development was essential to this course and remains so as we move forward. We also found that we needed to improve our process flow and internal communication to overcome some of the challenges associated with blending separate learning platforms. In using two different platforms to accommodate learner familiarity, we found that some of the assumed, automated functions of a single system (e.g. auto-enrollment, auto-notifications) did not work across both systems. The subsequential pivot has resulted in the creation of new systems of communication that, moving forward, will improve the effectiveness of our delivery.

2. Gauging Learner Satisfaction. Learners provided overwhelmingly positive responses to the course and shared rich, well integrated, and insightful reflections (see Appendix A). Module satisfaction scores, collected by a post Likert-like survey immediately following each module, were as follows: M1: 94%, M2: 96%, M3: 98%, M4: 97%, and M5: 100%, which resulted in an average score of 97% of the attendees who evaluated the module as "outstanding" (5) or "very good (4)." Each week, as our instructional team reviewed the session feedback, we re-worked the following week's

module to capture responses and address learners' goals. In reviewing the session feedback, we observed that learner satisfaction appeared to have increased from week one to week five. Part of this outcome can be explained by attrition; those most satisfied in week one continued through week five, but not all learners completed the entire course. By examining the feedback of learners who evaluated the modules as less than "very good," we quickly learned that we needed to further support learners by providing links to handouts and materials prior to and immediately following the module. Appendix A provides a collection of learner comments.

3. "Teach What You Need to Learn. Write What You Need to Read." Never has there been a more fitting opportunity for flourishing through teaching and learning than in this time of shared trauma. This pivot offered several opportunities for the educator team to learn new methods for delivery, as well as to expand our personal and professional resilience. Appreciative educators are lifelong learners and learning is iterative; hence, in the creation of this appreciative, co-learning environment, the course became richer each week due to the climate of compassion we all created together. Consequently, the course contributed to a layered and multidimensional experience for the team of educators. Individually and as a team, we grew both in content expertise and in teaching methods.

4. Student Recruitment Strategy. By opening the course to the broader community, the blended course became a tool for recruitment into the graduate and certificate programs in gerontology. For professionals and community members, we planned virtual student information sessions immediately following the course. These sessions served as an opportunity to introduce a new community of prospective students to the opportunities in pursuing a career in gerontology. This has become a regular recruitment strategy for the department.

Conclusion

This innovative approach to bridging classroom and community by building connection, in a time when public health protocol called for social distance and separation, will serve as a model for future programming and course offerings. Sharing evidence-based gerontological practice with a learning community composed of graduate students, professional learners, and community members enhanced the sense of belongingness and furthered students' professional identity development through connections with their larger professional network. Simultaneously, inviting our professional and community learners into the classroom with our students connected current professionals to their future through opportunities for generative narrative and mentoring.

Compassion fatigue, although undesirable, is a great unifier. The global fatigue resulting from the pandemic presented an invitation to pivot. Building or rebuilding compassion satisfaction begins with connecting with one's own professional purpose. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced stressors and opportunities into learners' and educators' personal and professional environments. Embracing an appreciative mindset and being intentional with an appreciative approach encouraged our team to co-create learning opportunities to enable all learners to become their best selves. Notably, this moment raised two compelling calls to action: (1) What is our response to the suffering of our graduate students, professional learners, and community members in the present midst of this crisis? and (2) How does this crisis call us to grow as appreciative educators for the future?

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Appendix A
Collection of Learner Responses and Reflections

Excellent application of the scholarship.
Great information about the acorn!!!

Having the courage or motivation to let go of who I used to be or what I used to be interested in, so I can make more room for who I am now and what interests me now, and so that I can become the person I want to be.

I am looking forward to session five. Each session is more dynamic. The comments from the group were thoughtful, inspiring, and motivational. The acorns were as different as the audience and the TED talk perfectly connected the ideas. Grateful for the opportunity to be a participant in this excellent program.

I love the ACORN exercise.

Insightful.. invigorating.. mindful...new perspective on how to enhance and repurpose my glow.. great class!

Looking forward to next week, Chapter 5 regarding team effort.

Love this co-learning environment! Thanks a lot for great experience! I am learning a lot from this course that help me in my life journey!

Love... Love...Love this webinar training! Thank you. Such a relaxing way to end the work day!

Great conversations to bring to light compassion success...learning so much...practical...

Great session. Loved how interactive it was. Most webinars I've been on are straight presentation and this is a refreshing change!

Great webinar. I learned some quality information on compassion fatigue and techniques to minimize it happening.

I appreciate her diving in to discuss each and every comment.

I enjoyed the chat/feedback the most---sharing that info is crucial in working w/and thru compassion fatigue. Thank You!

I find it much easier to learn while having the slides available as a handout to print and take notes on. Today's session did not have the slides available, so it was more difficult to fully process and take in the content.

I love the concept of some people being "sticky."

I was blown away. Loved the Merton quote and the dive into AI.

It was great! I rated this class a 4 because I'll save 5 for exciting upcoming lectures. Thanks for taking the time to provide us with these tools. I dislike being sticky all the time. A certificate is not required, but would be nice to show my participation. I am excited about sharing these noteworthy tools and concepts with others.

Love to just understand a new way of thinking

Really appreciate the interactive poll questions and being able to share personal thoughts in this session

Thank you for addressing this issue. I feel like I've been heard, and that is a rare and priceless gift.

This course is timely as I'm questioning if I need a change in type of SW or a change in career.

Thoroughly enjoyed the session.

Well done, especially having [presenter] share responses. I knew my compassion satisfaction was high when I was so in the moment that time didn't matter, and I liked and used the descriptive term "non-ordinary time" for such experiences, even as I am not of Roman Catholic background or affiliation. Well done. Balanced. Appreciate the break (which I had noted it at beginning to be more focused). And before of timing, the idea of interaction at the end was great. IDEA: It would have been very helpful to have seen in writing, not just heard, people's thoughts. Hard for me to follow—but interesting and said with enthusiasm so I stayed connected.

Great training experience! Thank you. I learned a lot of valuable information over the past 5 weeks. This course should be mandatory for anyone working in Human Services. "Mutuality in order for trust to be established."

Really enjoyed the depth of information!!

Great speakers just not enough time!!!

Thanks for an excellent session. I thoroughly enjoyed the skillful and informative presentations and the rapport between the speakers. This was a great learning opportunity!

Excellent series.

I did not realize how much I needed this training and information. Thank you all! Well done.

I was made to realize I need to focus on narratives so I can appreciate the meaning of the story in order to effect Compassion Satisfaction.

The session was fantastic! Took away many tactics to implement into my organization. Speakers were outstanding.. thank your for such thoughtful and practical information.

Fabulous Presenter

[Presenter] has very informative slides and is well-paced in how she presents information. Reading, considering, reflecting, and sharing the comments of some of the attendees made this more engaging since it may not be feasible to interact directly/live.

Great information on compassion fatigue and burnout. Can't wait until next week session.

Great start to a very important topic that I believe all of us are impacted by in someway.

I could not see what other people posted; so it would be helpful for you, [presenter], to read those you think we all would benefit from hearing, names not included.

Obviously an important topic as evidenced by interest and comments.

I periodically lost audio connection, it might be from my internet. However, the lecture was very organized, and clear explanation for me.

Introduced great strategies!!

Thank you for making the handouts available during the session.

The speaker's microphone went garbled and cut out at 2 points during the presentation.

The topic of Compassionate Fatigue is one that is so valuable because it will help give definition, meaning and help us be more mindful to our feelings, those of others and our community. This will help us to talk about something we may not know how to talk about that could benefits on so many levels. Excited to learn and participate in this great program.

This was a great class. I learned so much more about compassion fatigue. I am a leader that is responsible for taking care of the people that take care of our citizens including our vulnerable children and older adults. I am looking forward to next weeks class, so I can learn more about how I can be of support to them. Thank you for offering this class.

Well researched & paced. Appreciated the balance of reflection, participation, educational content. Excited to be a part of the position change by normalizing this reality & eliminating the associated silence!!