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## Who Helps Our Helpers? Rediscovering Joy in Medicine by Addressing Secondary Trauma

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# WHO HELPS OUR HELPERS?

# REDISCOVERING JOY IN MEDICINE BY ADDRESSING SECONDARY TRAUMA

Donald M. Friedman, M.D. Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA. and Vic Compher, MSS, LCSW

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Charles R. Figley, PhD, quote from CAREgivers film

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#### SECONDARY TRAUMA/ COMPASSION FATIGUE/ VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Secondary Trauma/Compatssion Fatigue is "...the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person..." Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized. ed. by Charles R. Figley, Ph.D., New York: Brunner/ Mazel, 1995.

Somewhat parallel to PTSD, though generally less severe, it may include "...hyperarousal, avoidance of stressful situations, and re-experiencing difficult events..." Back AL, Deignan PF, Potter PA. Compassion, compassion fatigue, and burnout: Key insights for oncology professionals. Am Soc Clin Oncol Educ Book; 2014:e454-59.

#### Secondary trauma related to grief:

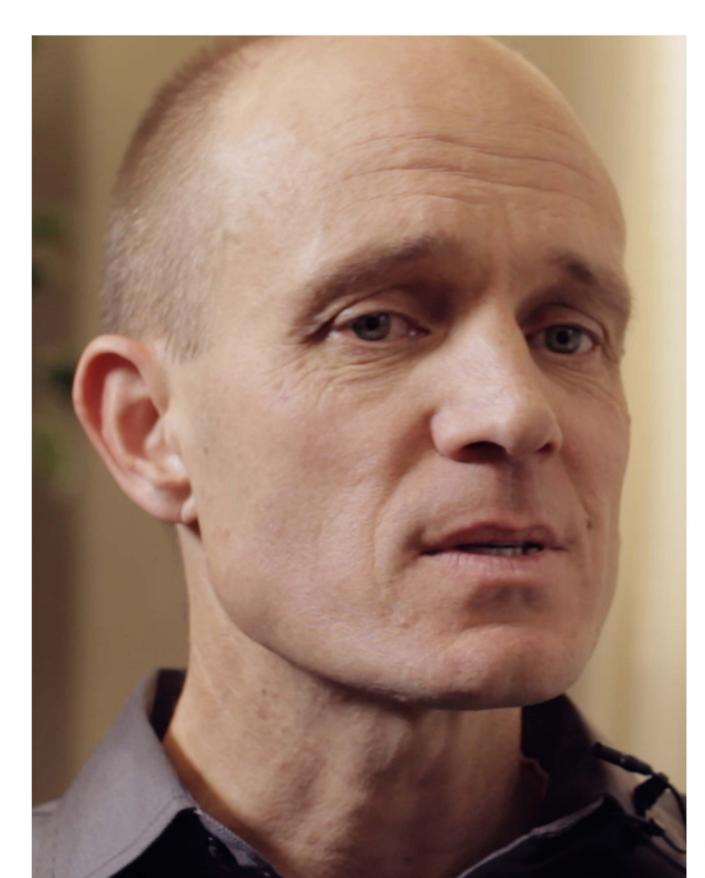
"For physicians, sadness is part of the job. There is pain in watching your patients suffer; there is grief when they die... If the grief is relentlessly suppressed... the result can be spectrum is the doctor who is inundated with grief and can't function because of the overwhelming sorrow." Danielle Ofri, What Doctors Feel; How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine. Boston: Beacon Press. 2013, p 121

#### Secondary Trauma:

"All the stories that I have painfully collected have come to haunt me with their tragic endings, as if I am the author and must take full responsibility." Abraham Verghese, My Own Country. New York: Vintage Books. 1994 p.423

"I feel such pain when I think of their faces."

Abraham Verghese, My Own Country. New York: Vintage Books. 1994 p.428





#### **Secondary Trauma Symptoms**

Panic Attacks

Concentration Difficulties

• Memory Problems

Flashbacks

Appetite Fluctuations

Rapid heart rate

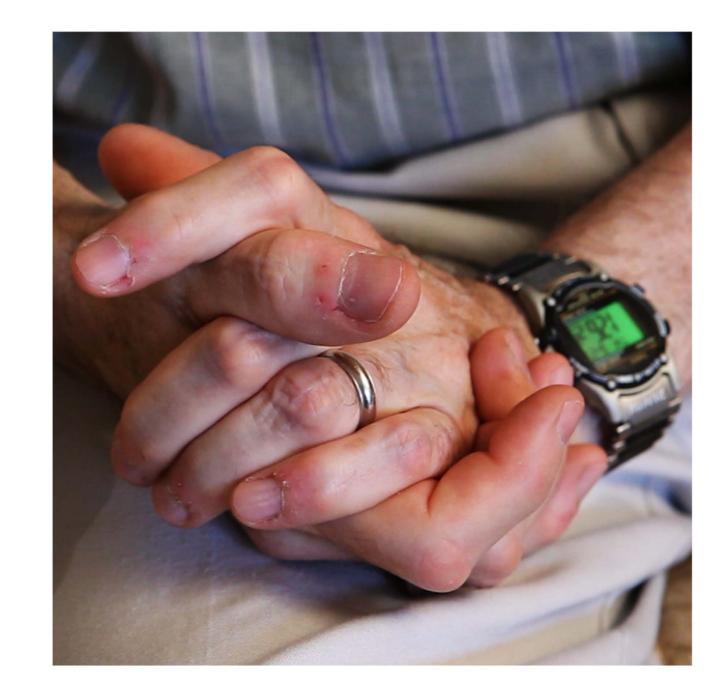
#### Antisocial feelings

### **BURNOUT**

"Burnout has three components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of ineffectiveness at work..."

Back AL, Deignan PF, Potter PA. Compassion, compassion fatigue, and burnout: Key insights for oncology professionals. Am Soc Clin Oncol Educ Book; 2014:e454-59.

Burnout usually relates to overwhelming and seeming unreasonable working conditions but could also result from chronically working with populations that have experienced trauma and/or suffering.





#### **Burnout Symptoms**

- Overwhelming physical, emotional, psychological,
- and spiritual exhaustion Feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job
- A sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment

- Poor judgment
- Professional and personal boundary violations
- Interpersonal conflicts

#### **Feeling Overwhelmed:**

"In Johnson City, I was providing all the care for my fifty patients. I was my own drone. And I was getting very tired. And sometimes very angry."

Abraham Verghese, My Own Country. New York: Vintage Books. 1994, p.279

"Burnout also leads to a large swath of physicians who aren't as empathetic toward their patients as they could be. These doctors don't listen as carefully or thoroughly as they should, and they may brush off patients' concerns...they may be overwhelmed by anger and frustration. Such characteristics directly affect patients." Danielle Ofri, What Doctors Feel; How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine. Boston:Beacon Press. 2013, p.159

PORTRAITS OF PROFESSIONAL THEIR PASSION. THEIR PAIN.

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0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

US working population between 2011 and 2014. Mayo Clinic Proc. Dec 2015;90(12):1600-1613.

Preventive medicine/occupational medicine

Mean burnout among all physicians participating

PHYSICIAN BURNOUT GRAPH - 2015

#### PERSONAL SELF-CARE

#### Some key elements of self-care:

...Recognizing self-vulnerability; maintain adequate sleep patterns; good nutrition; work-life balance; regular exercise; boundary setting, massage; relaxation; continued education; assertiveness; meditation; mindfulness based stress reduction; self-reflection; recognizing and attending to spiritual needs..." CS Melvin, Historical review in understanding burnout, professional compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress disorder from a hospice and palliative nursing perspective. J Hospice and Pallia Nursing.

Shanafelt TD, Hasan O, Dyrbye LN, et al. Changes in burnout and satisfaction with work-life balance in physicians and the general

#### **Create Work-Life Balance**

"Being aware of what you need to thrive in life, despite the challenges of your work...of knowing yourself well enough to recognize where you have issues, where you store stress in your body...studying what things tend to work to calm yourself down, to bring back the joy, to bring back the self confidence..." Dr. Charles R. Figley, quote from CAREgivers film

#### **Develop Your Own Personal Emotional Safety Plan**

"In Sanctuary (model) everybody has to have a safety plan...every staff member, including the director: 5 simple things you can do when you feel your emotions are starting to get out of control, a prayer, a meditation, deep breathing, pacing, going out for a walk, listening to music for a minute...simple things, not obvious...you just take a mental break to calm down, de-stress a little bit...and then we share each others' safety plans which creates a network of social support..." Dr. Sandra Bloom, quote from CAREgivers film

#### **COMPASSION SATISFACTION**

"Compassion satisfaction is the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well...to help others through your work...to contribute to the work setting or...the greater good

Beth Hudnall-Stamm, PhD - http://www.proqol.org/Compassion\_Satisfaction.html

"It is an honor and privilege to work with traumatized people, to watch people go from a ball of fear to joy and happiness and confidence. This is the essence of compassion satisfaction. The client is smiling. The client says 'I don't need you anymore.' The client is clearly articulating what you thought initially, and they're using it in their own words. That counterbalances the impact of compassion fatigue.

If you have high compassion satisfaction, it counterbalances compassion fatigue because it influences the very kind of notions that compassion fatigue is associated with - that I'm overwhelmed, not effective; I'm incompetent because of my emotional reaction." Charles R. Figley, PhD, quote from CAREgivers film

"Our work is a privilege to have a front row seat to what it means to be a human being." Rachel Naomi Remen, Finding Meaning in Medicine and Nursing Workshop, Oct 9-10, 2009

"Healing is not a relationship between an expert and a problem. It is the outcome of meeting as two whole people who recognize the potential in their relationship to exceed the limitations of both science and disease." Rachel Naomi Remen, Hematology/Oncology Clinics of N.Amer. 2008;22(4):767-73

#### **RESILIENCE**

"Resilience is the ability of an individual to respond to stress in a healthy, adaptive way such that personal goals are achieved at minimal psychological and physical cost; resilient individuals not only "bounce back" rapidly after challenges, but also grow stronger in the process...Resilience is a key to enhancing quality of care, quality of caring, and sustainability of the healthcare workforce."

RM Epstein and MS Krasner. Physician resilience:what it means, why it matters, and how to promote it. Acad Med. 2013;88:301-303

#### **RESILIENCY REQUIRES**

• Self-reflection and self-awareness of stresses in one's life and work, including difficult feelings and experiences.

Finding meaning in the trauma and learning from the situation.

Asking for help and relating to and sharing experiences with others.

Finding institutional support and a structure that encourages all of the above.



#### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES THAT PROVIDE PEER SUPPORT

Create Structures of Peer Support for Professional Caregivers in your Medical Setting— "By giving care, we will come face to face with loss connected to trauma. It is essential for agencies and corporations that provide care to develop structures for their caregivers, and to invite our clients, professional colleagues and family member to talk about it..." Dr. Silvio E. Fittipaldi, quote from CAREgivers film

#### **EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES:**

• MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR) at the Mindfulness Institute of the Jefferson-Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine http://hospitals.jefferson.edu/departments-and-services/mindfulness-institute/

• GRIEF ROUNDS Conducted monthly in the Medical Intensive Care Unit at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Wilde L, Worster B, Oxman D. Monthly "Grief Rounds" to improve residents' experience and decrease burnout in a medical intensive care unit rotation. Amer J Medical Quality. 2016;31(4):379

 THE SCHWARTZ CENTER ROUNDS http://www.theschwartzcenter.org/supporting

• UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - The ForYOU Model of "Care for the Caregivers"

http://www.muhealth.org/about/quality-of-care/office-of-clinical-effectiveness/foryou-team/caring-for-caregivers/

NOTE: PLEASE CHECK OUT ONLINE LINKS TO THESE AND A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL

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