



Ontario College of  
Social Workers and  
Social Service Workers



Ordre des travailleurs  
sociaux et des techniciens  
en travail social de l'Ontario



Maximizing  
Professional Effectiveness

in Turbulent Times

AMED | JUNE 13, 2013  
Annual Meeting & Education Day

**BREAK OUT SESSION 'B' 2:45 – 3:45 pm**

***“Compassion Fatigue:  
A Peak into a Social Worker’s  
Personal Journey”***

*Sally Lavergne, BSW, MSW, RSW  
Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON*

***Edited Power Point Presentation***

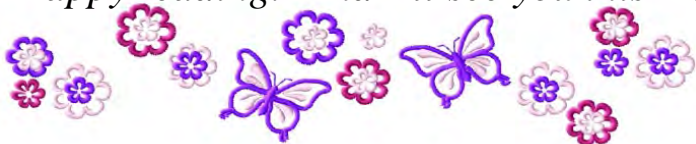


*Hello!*

*So cool that you'll be attending my presentation .... "Compassion Fatigue: A Peak into a Social Worker's Personal Journey" at the OCSWSSW 2013 Conference this coming June 13<sup>th</sup>!*

*I originally developed this presentation approximately five years ago for Laurentian University (Sudbury) Social Work students. My first presentation was a 'traditional' one, that is, a simple sharing of information on the topic of compassion fatigue and stress. Students suggested that adding some examples of my own life experiences would make it even more interesting and "real". And that it is exactly what I did! This meant regularly up-dating my presentation and modifying it! A one hour presentation quickly turned into a 2 hour + presentation!! For the conference, I only have 1 hour . Very challenging for me to decide what to keep the presentation and what to omit! I've therefore decided to have two power point presentations...this one, and the actual one I will work with at the Conference. Some slides are found in both, while some slides are only in one, or the other! For example, the slides in which I share my own personal challenges and struggles are not in this power point, yet will be in the one at Conference.*

*Happy reading! And I'll see you this Thursday June 13<sup>th</sup> at the Conference!*



*Sally*



*Bonjour!*

*Superbe que tu seras à ma présentation.... “Compassion Fatigue: A Peak into a Social Worker’s Personal Journey” lors de la JAAF de l’ OTSTTSO le 13 juin prochain!*

*Cette présentation fut originellement conçue pour le corps étudiant du programme de service social de l’université Laurentienne (Sudbury). Ma première présentation était de nature “traditionnelle”, c’est-à-dire un partage d’information et discussion. Entant que feedback, l’on m’a suggérée d’y ajouter des exemples de mon vécu et de mes défis personnels , afin que la présentation soit plus ‘réelle’.*

*Bonne idée! Et c’est ce que j’ai fait! Au fil des années, j’ai du y apporter des mises-à-jour!*

*Cette présentation d’une heure s’est rapidement transformée en une de deux heures! Wow!*

*Ce fut alors tout un défi pour moi de modifier le contenu afin de respecter le 60 minutes allouées pour la conférence. Oh oui!!*

*J’ai alors décidé d’avoir deux présentations “power point” – celle-ci, et celle que je présenterai le 13 juin prochain. Tu retrouveras certaines des diapositives dans les deux présentations, certaines que dans une, ou l’autre. Par exemple, je partagerai les fiches au sujet de mes défis personnelles que lors de ma présentation en vivo!*

*Bonne lecture et à très bientôt!*

*Sally*



# *Compassion Fatigue*

**EXPERT**



- Sally ...not an expert on topic
- sharing of information
- some slides... reading, others elaborate
- some slides .... no references!
- personal experiences, challenges





## *What should I expect*



- A non-academic presentation!
- To hear info I most likely already know!
  - For my memory to be refreshed!
    - To have a review!
  - Maybe to learn something new!



Sally to run-out of time!

About Me

Self-Reflection

Self-Awareness

Ah—Ha!

**Moment**

*« The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering, loss, pain, feelings... daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet ».*


(Naomi Remen, 1996)







***STRESSORS*** - from the outside world & inner self


**STRESS!** the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure.



a condition that evolves slowly over a period of prolonged stress; wearing down and wearing out of physical and emotional energy; related to work environment



# Compassion Fatigue

*The 'cost of caring' for others in emotional and physical pain...  
helper feels deep physical and emotional exhaustion...  
pronounced change in helper's ability to feel empathy...*

(Figley, 1982)



*A condition that affects those  
who do their work well.*

(Figley, 1995)

# *Compassion Fatigue...*

## *what can it look like?*

- exhaustion
- reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- anger and irritability
- increased use of alcohol, drugs; gambling....
- dread of working with certain clients/patients
- diminished sense of enjoyment of career
- intrusive imagery or dissociation



© david & goliath  
**I UNDERSTAND  
I JUST DON'T CARE**



# *What can it look like?*



- disruption of world view
- heightened anxiety or irrational fears
- hypersensitivity or insensitivity to emotional material
- difficulty separating work life from personal life
- missing work, sick days
- impaired ability to make decisions and care for
- problems with intimacy and in personal relationships



# *Who can be affected?*

- anyone who is a helper, caretaker, caregiver
- listens, hears, sees horrific life stories
- inevitable... all affected to varying degrees
- continuum = at times immuned or beaten down



# *Prevention and Intervention*



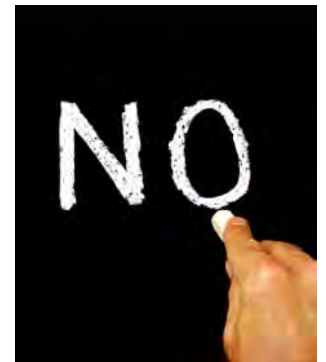
## **Workplace**

- openly discuss, recognize, normalize
- breaks, mental health days
- peer support, debriefing
- monitoring case load, professional development, check-ins



# At Work...

- monitor caseload
- strength's perspective
- I am not an expert!!!
- workshops, presentation, projects...
- breath, rocking chair, posters
- self-talk
- lunch break...?? rest head on desk
- check-in with supervisor and co-workers
- set boundaries & say NO
- let go of what can't control
- learn from students





\_\_\_\_\_ grant me the  
**SERENITY**  
to accept the things  
I cannot change,  
the **COURAGE**  
to change  
those things I can,  
and the **WISDOM**  
to know the difference.

\_\_\_\_\_ donnez-moi  
la SÉRÉNITÉ d'accepter les choses  
que je ne peux changer,  
le COURAGE de changer les choses  
que je peux,  
et la SAGESSE d'en connaître  
la différence.

# On a Personal Level



Carefully and honestly assess my personal life

- \* balance between « *giving* » and « *receiving* » ?
- \* caregiver to someone else ?
- \* exercise, hobby, non-work interest ?
- \* relying on alcohol, food, gambling, shopping...?
- \* family life, relationships ?



*Improved self-care is  
the cornerstone of  
compassion fatigue  
prevention.*



(Mathieu, 2007)



***My CFSC Kit***  
***(Compassion Fatigue Self-Care)***



# *What to include in my CFSC Kit ?*

- ✓ what are my warning signs → scaling
- ✓ schedule a regular « *self check-in* »
- ✓ what do I *have* control over?
- ✓ what do I have *no* control over?
- ✓ what do I enjoy to *relieve* my stress?
- ✓ what *works* for me to relieve my stress?
- ✓ what makes me more *resilient* to my stressors?
- ✓ my personal beliefs – stress, burn-out, CF ?





# 's Self Care Plan!

MEDITATE  
TAKE LOTS OF BREAKS  
MUSIC  
**Mind**  
FUN!  
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

TEA  
NOURISHING FOOD  
EXERCISE  
**Body**  
EVERYTHING IN MODERATION  
SLEEP EIGHT HOURS

Supportive People In My Life:

GRETCHEN  
MOM  
MI VIEJO  
ALBERTO  
LYNNE  
CAROLINE  
REED  
DEBORAH

MEDITATE  
HUMAN CONNECTIONS  
SELF-REFLECTION  
**Spirit**  
FULFILLMENT  
THOUGH USING MY AWESOME SKILLS

I want to accomplish:

PEACE  
SERENITY  
CONTROL  
HAPPINESS  
GOOD WORK  
BE A GOOD PERSON



*I encourage you to....*

- self-care
- monitor caseload, responsibilities → variety
- identify your own resilience and strengths and those of your clients
  - talk, share
  - don't isolate
- beliefs → asking for help....



Ah—Ha!

**Moment**