

Compassion Fatigue

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Compassion Fatigue

Part 1: Summary of Amy Cunningham's Message

In the Ted Talk show titled "Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of Vicarious Trauma," the speaker, Cunningham (2018) discusses compassion fatigue. She defines it as the symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder that people working in helping professions such as nurses, counselors, doctors, therapists and police officers receive vicariously when they become secondary targets of trauma. She also says that it is possible to experience compassion fatigue even outside professions for example when one is helping a friend overcome trauma, caring for a sick friend or family member or raising children.

According to Cunningham (2018), empathy increases one's risk of experiencing compassion fatigue. She, however, says that it is normal for people to be preoccupied with the suffering of the people they help a few days after the incidence but when the preoccupation persists for weeks, or even years, then one is experiencing compassion fatigue. The memories of the suffering of the people one helped do not just persist but they also change one's life. While compassion fatigue is significantly distinct from burnout, it has been called burnout for decades. However, research has helped to distinguish between the two. Burnout entails being tired, worn-out and not liking one's job. Compassion fatigue conversely involves persistent memories of the sufferings of the people one helped to the extent that such memories begin to change who they are. Compassion fatigue manifests through lack of sleep or oversleeping, workaholic tendencies, feeling less appreciated and under-resourced, and self-entitlement to negative behavior like wasting of money and time. Luckily, compassion fatigue can be diagnosed and treated at any time.

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Part 2: Documentation of the 10 Minutes a Day Therapy

From the Ted Talk show, Cunningham (2018) advises that one can offset compassion fatigue by taking ten minutes each day to care for themselves. The chart below presents my ten minutes for a week and the activities I engaged in to care for myself.

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY
MONDAY	6:00- 6:10 AM	During this ten minute time frame, I meditated
TUESDAY	N/A	N/A
WEDNESDAY	6:00- 6:10 AM	During this ten minute time frame, I went for a walk around the compound
THURSDAY	6:00- 6:10 AM	During this ten minute time frame, I jogged
FRIDAY	5:30- 5:40 PM	During this ten minute time frame, I meditated
SATURDAY	11:00- 11:10 AM	During this ten minute time frame, I jogged
SUNDAY	6:00- 6:10 PM	During this ten minute time frame, I went for a walk around the compound

Part 3: End of the Week Reflection

I found the ten minutes of daily therapy to care for myself fascinating. The activity was also easy for ten minutes out of my busy schedule is achievable without any difficulty. I, however, did not find time for the activity on Tuesday since I had a lot of work to do. I selected the activities to care for myself that I engaged in during the ten minutes span randomly without any prior plan. Mostly, I decided on the activity at the time of taking the therapy. I found the

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practice of taking ten minutes to care for myself every day beneficial. Every time I engaged in the practice, I felt more energized and prepared to tackle all the challenges that I would face. I noticed that if I engaged in practice in the morning, my day ran quite smoothly. I will continue with the practice without missing a single day.

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Reference

Cunningham, Amy. (2018). "Tedx Drowing In Empathy - Bing Video". *Bing.Com*. Retrieved

from [https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tedx+drowing+in+empathy&&view=detail&mid=98A4FE85C5FBA5772A7198A4FE85C5FBA5772A71&&FORM=VRDGAR)

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