



COMPASSION FATIGUE
IN BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT NURSING

DEBI BOYLE RN, MSN, AOCNS®, FAAN
ONCOLOGY CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE MEDICAL CENTER/
CHAO FAMILY COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER
ORANGE, CALIFORNIA




THE BLENDING OF THE PERSONAL WITH THE PROFESSIONAL EMOTIONAL STRAIN




COMPASSION FATIGUE HISTORICALLY DEFINED




Compassion fatigue is debilitating weariness brought about by repetitive, empathic responses to the pain and suffering of others.

La Rowe, 2005



Nurse compassion fatigue is an understudied phenomenon.



COMPASSION FATIGUE IS AN UNKNOWN YET COMMON COROLLARY OF NURSING PRACTICE

- Nurse compassion fatigue is ...
 - Multifactorial
 - Not anticipated
 - Not addressed
 - Not admitted
 - Not managed
 - Not investigated





**WHO ELSE EXPERIENCES
WHAT WE DO?
OVER TIME ...24/7**


Who else requires compassion competency to this degree?

**UNIQUE COROLLARIES OF
ONCOLOGY/BMT NURSING**

- For many, we don't walk them through their cancer journey, we walk **WITH** them through their experience
- **What we witness ...**
 - Isolation
 - Dependency
 - Symptom distress
 - Confusion/information discord
 - Family chaos
 - Futility
 - Missed opportunities
 - Premature dying




THE BMT NURSING WORLD



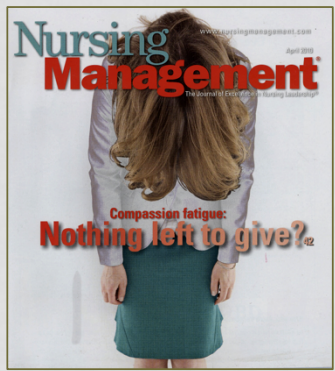
•INTERCEPTION OF CRITICAL CARE/CANCER CARE
•MAJOR CHANCES AT LIFE ANEW
•LIFE THREATENING TREATMENTS TO TREAT LIFE THREATENING DISEASE
•CONSIDERABLE LONG-TERM SURVIVOR SEQUELAE
•DOSE ANYONE LEAVE THE LAND OF BMT UNSCARRED?

Your world is overshadowed with the possibility of premature death

THE EXPECTATION THAT WE CAN BE IMMERSSED IN SUFFERING AND LOSS DAILY AND NOT BE TOUCHED BY IT, IS AS UNREALISTIC AS EXPECTING TO BE ABLE TO WALK THROUGH WATER WITHOUT GETTING WET. THIS SORT OF DENIAL IS NO SMALL MATTER.



RACHEL NAOMI REMEN M.D.
KITCHEN TABLE WISDOM: STORIES THAT HEAL




NURSE COMPASSION FATIGUE

Cost of caring for others in pain

DIFFERENTIATING BURNOUT FROM COMPASSION FATIGUE



BURNOUT =
Stresses clinicians experience within and related to the work environment



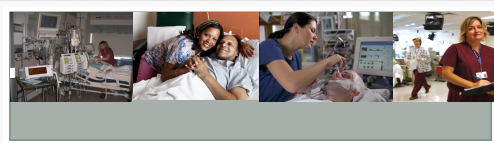
COMPASSION FATIGUE =
Stresses related to the relationships between clinician and patient

WORKING DEFINITION

Nurse compassion fatigue refers to an emotional state with negative (i.e., psychological, physical, spiritual) consequences that emanate from intense interpersonal stress where patient/family-related traumatizing events are witnessed by nurses in their work environment over time. This stress revisits personal unresolved trauma experienced by the nurse. Yet despite repeated recall, the stress remains neglected. The cumulative effects of compassion fatigue result in personal and professional consequences that impact social and work-related performance.

Boyle & Bush, 2008

THE CAPACITY FOR COMPASSION AND EMPATHY SEEMS TO BE AT THE CORE OF OUR ABILITY TO DO OUR WORK AND AT THE CORE OF OUR ABILITY TO BE WOUNDED BY THE WORK.



BMT COMPASSION FATIGUE NURSE EXEMPLARS STORIES FROM THE FIELD



- If you have experienced CF, how did you know? What characteristics did you exhibit? Did your colleagues or family mention anything to you about this?
- What clinical scenarios prompt CF for you?
- Do you think CF in BMT nursing is different than that experienced by other nurses?
- What would help you and your colleagues address CF @ work?

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR FEELINGS?



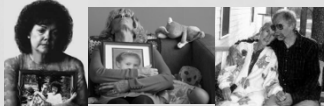
WHAT IS YOUR COMPASSION FATIGUE THERMOMETER READING?

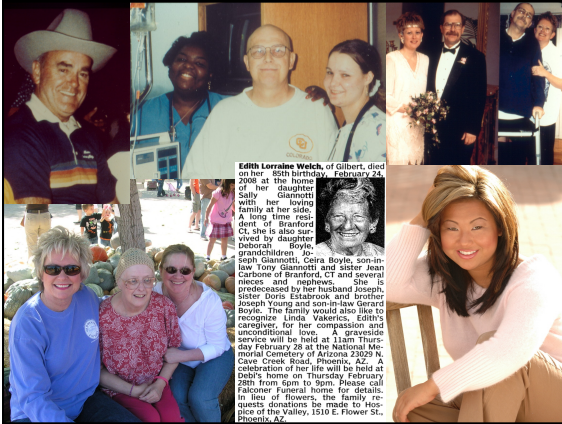


CUMULATIVE GRIEF/UNATTENDED SORROW NURSE INVENTORY


- Years as an oncology/BMT nurse _____
- Monthly estimate of dying patients _____
- Yearly estimate of dying patients _____
- Cumulative estimate of death exposure = _____

- Nursing years 12
- Monthly estimate of dying patients 3
- Yearly estimate of dying patients 36
- Cumulative estimate of death exposure = 432






Edith Lorraine Welch, of Gilbert, died on her 80th birthday, February 26, 2013, at the home of her daughter Sally Giannotti with her loving family at her side. A long time resident of Branford Ct, she is also survived by daughter Deborah Boye, grandchildren Joseph Giannotti, Ceia Boye, son-in-law Tony Giannotti and sister Jean Carbone of Branford CT and several nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her husband Joseph, sister Doris Estabrook and brother Joseph Young and son-in-law Gerard Boye. The family would also like to recognize Linda Yakertis, Edith's caregiver, for her compassion and unconditional love. A graveside service will be held at 11am Thursday February 28 at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona 2025 N. Cave Creek Road, Phoenix, AZ. A celebration of her life will be held at Deb's home on Thursday February 28th from 5pm to 8pm. Please call Catherine Ferrara home for details. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Hospice of the Valley, 1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ.



CUMULATIVE GRIEF AND UNATTENDED SORROW EMANATING FROM WORK & HOME


CRITICAL CONSEQUENCES



HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT RECOGNIZING COMPASSION FATIGUE IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS?


HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE COMPASSION FATIGUE?

- Feelings of depression, responses of negativity
- Lethargy, little energy
- Sadness, emotional lability or response out of context to situation severity
- Sustained effort to subdue mounting melancholy




HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE COMPASSION FATIGUE?

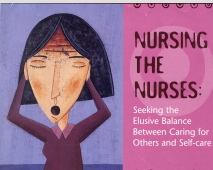
- Boundary issues/overextension
- Lack of attention to self (i.e., diet, exercise, personal enjoyment)
- Reward substitution (i.e., food, ETOH)
- Difficulty accepting feedback (+ or -)



HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE COMPASSION FATIGUE?



- Job transfer, turnover
- Impatience with family or issues not deemed 'life threatening'
- Frustration with partner insensitivity to needs



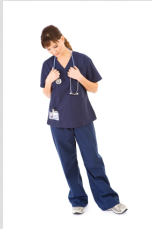
INTERVENTION OPTIONS

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AFTER WITNESSING OUR EMOTIONAL TSUNAMI

DOMAINS OF WELLNESS

(... A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCT THAT DESCRIBES A POSITIVE STATE RATHER THAN SIMPLY THE ABSENCE OF ILLNESS.)

- Social
- Emotional
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Spiritual
- Work




RESILIENCE

- ✓The ability to recover from adversity
- ✓Pursue and sustain growth; choose forward direction


UNDERTAKING A PERSONAL INVENTORY

- **Current stressors:**
 - Work
 - Family (nuclear & extended)
 - Roles
- **Strengths**
- **Reactions to death & dying**
- **Self-care intervention audit**

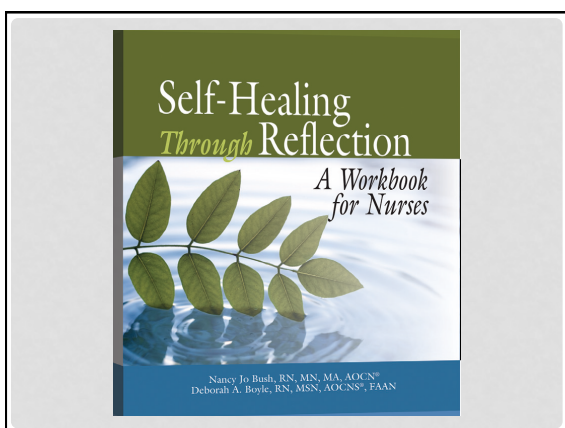
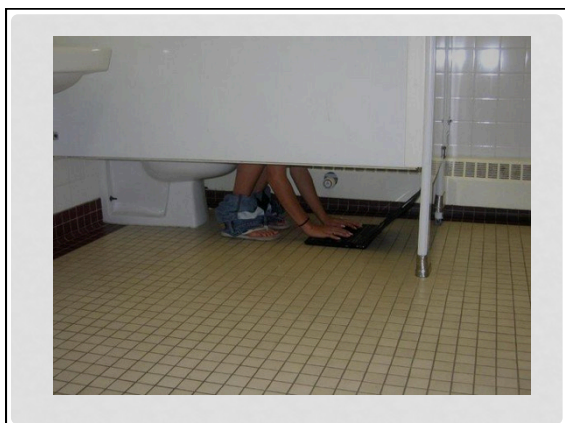


THE NURSE THRIVING SCALE

1	5	10
EXISTING	SURVIVING	THRIVING
Hangin' on, enduring, subsisting	Living through, continuing, sustaining, persevering	Flourishing, growing, evolving, succeeding




Where are you?



40 INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

EDUCATION-FOCUSED (6):


- Basic communication skills competency
- Seminars in conflict resolution
- Learning forums on caring for 'difficult' patients and families
- Recognition & management of compassion fatigue
- Interdisciplinary discussions (i.e., Schwartz Rounds)
- Mandatory ELNEC participation



INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

GRIEF-FOCUSED (8):

- Organize 'Grief Cart' for families
- 'Code White' for the staff nurse
- Remembrance Ceremony
- Remembrance Journal
- De-briefing sessions; nurse M&M rounds




INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- Post-death nursing care protocol for family
- Site/issue-specific EOL interventions
- Formal acknowledgement to family





Some patients leave indelible marks on our nursing souls. Such was the case with your loved one. We are thinking of you.



Other Sayings On Cards


- We want you to know that your loved one will be warmly remembered by those of us who cared for (her/him). We hold your sorrow in our hearts.
- A graceful spirit, a giving heart, a beautiful soul. That's how we will remember your loved one.
- You are cared for deeply and thought about often. We hope that with treasured memories, comes comfort and peace.
- We hold you in our hearts during this time of profound sadness. We were blessed to be part of your family's life.

May you find comfort in knowing that we are holding you close in our hearts during this difficult time. We were blessed to be part of your family's life.



INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **RECOGNITION-FOCUSED (3):**
 - **Formal acknowledgement of colleagues**
 - Around sadness, loss & death of favored patient
 - Verbal positive feedback
 - 'We Want Our Nurses To Know' board
 - Nominate for awards
 - Cards from peers



As a fellow nurse, I see the difference you make in the lives of those you care for. I feel honored to have you as a peer.




Other Sayings On Cards

- You made a difference today and I wanted to acknowledge your excellence.
- Your teamwork is really appreciated.
- You give so much to your patients and families. Your nursing care is exceptional.
- I want you to know what a tremendous role model you are to me.
- You exemplify the best in nursing – competence, compassion, and commitment.
- You make me proud to be a nurse.


Your professional passion is contagious. What a joy it is to work with you.






INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **Manager-derived**
 - Handwritten note on BD, comment on 'Above and Beyond' behaviors
 - Effective self-care within performance appraisal criteria??
- **Implement patient/family focus groups**




INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **STRESS-REDUCTION FOCUSED (12):**
 - Dedicated counselor for staff
 - Stress-specific support group
 - Therapy student placement (i.e., Massage, Reiki)
 - Meditation, yoga, aromatherapy offerings
 - Pet therapy for nurses!!
 - **Nurse Quiet Time:**
 - Meditation breaks
 - Journaling
 - Music therapy





INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **STRESS-REDUCTION FOCUSED:**
 - Annual Retreat
 - Book club
 - Safe house/safe friend contract
 - Schwartz Rounds
 - Humor therapy
 - Lobby for additional resources
 - Office-based 'Brown Bag' monthly lunch with counselor



INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **SPIRITUALLY-FOCUSED (5):**
 - Prayer @ start of shift
 - Blessing of nurse hands
 - 'Tea for the Soul'
 - Offer prayer @ EOL with family
 - Team prayer at bedside following death

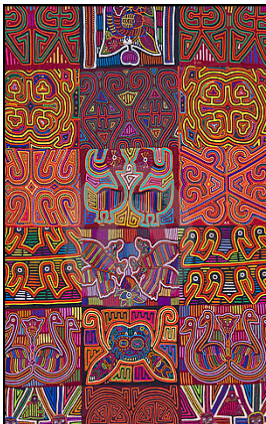
INTERVENTION OPTIONS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING AT WORK

- **FITNESS-FOCUSED (6):**
 - Nutrition/weight management consultation
 - Colleague/team participation in community walks
 - Smoking cessation
 - Risk assessment inventories
 - Break/lunch walking program
 - Aerobics/fitness class post-work




POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

- **Compassion satisfaction**
 - Pleasure derived from the work of helping others
- **Post-traumatic growth**
 - Positive results of life review
- **Self-awareness**
 - Etiology of distress
- **Exquisite empathy**
 - Feedback validates & reinforces effectiveness of caring behaviors

In traditional Native American teaching, it is said that each time you heal someone, you give away a piece of yourself until at some point, you will require healing.
SOURCE: MARK STEINICKI (2008). EMPATHY FATIGUE. SPRINGER PUBLISHING. NEW YORK.



BLESSING FOR A NURSE

JOHN O'DONOHUE, *TO BLESS THE SPACE BETWEEN US*