Dealing with Compassion Fatigue: How to Care for Yourself While Caring for Others (CLE)

Sheraton Boston
Back Bay Ballroom D, 2nd Floor
Friday, August 10, 2014
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Dealing with Compassion Fatigue: How to Care for Yourself While Caring for Others

A PRESENTATION FOR THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION
ANNUAL MEETING
JEFF FORTGANG, PHD
ZELIDEH MARTINEZ, PHD
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

_Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue_  
_ProQOL_ Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am happy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel connected to others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Because of my [helping], I have felt &quot;on edge&quot; about various things.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I like my work as a [helper].</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I have beliefs that sustain me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am the person I always wanted to be.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My work makes me feel satisfied.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I believe I can make a difference through my work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I am proud of what I can do to [help].</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I feel &quot;bogged down&quot; by the system.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I have thoughts that I am a &quot;success&quot; as a [helper].</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I can’t recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I am a very caring person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I am happy that I chose to do this work.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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This worksheet helps you to get an estimate of your score on the ProQOL. To make it easy for you to use on your own, scores are grouped into high, average and low. If your score falls close to the border between categories, you may find that you fit into one group better than the other. The scores are estimates of your compassion satisfaction and fatigue. It is important that you use this information to assist you in understanding how your professional quality of life is, not to set you into one category or the other. The ProQOL is not a medical test and should not be used for diagnosis.

What is my score and what does it mean?

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

Scoring

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. Go to items 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29 and reverse your score. For example, if you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. We ask you to reverse these scores because we have learned that the test works better if you reverse these scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Wrote</th>
<th>Change to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find your score on **Compassion Satisfaction**, add your scores on questions 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions was  
43 or less Low  
Between 23 and 41 Around 50 Average  
42 or more 57 or more High

To find your score on **Burnout**, add your scores questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 29. Find your score on the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The sum of my Burnout questions</th>
<th>So My Score Equals</th>
<th>My Level of Burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 or less</td>
<td>43 or less</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 23 and 41</td>
<td>Around 50</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 or more</td>
<td>57 or more</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find your score on **Secondary Traumatic Stress**, add your scores on questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28. Find your score on the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The sum of my Secondary Traumatic Stress questions</th>
<th>So My Score Equals</th>
<th>My Level of Secondary Traumatic Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Based on your responses, your personal scores are below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

**Compassion Satisfaction**
Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.
The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

**Burnout**
Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.
The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a “bad day” or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

**Secondary Traumatic Stress**
The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work-related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other’s trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example due to your work as an emergency medical personnel, a disaster responder or as a medicine personnel, this is not
secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others’ traumatic events as a result of your work, such as providing care to people who have sustained emotional or physical injuries, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

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MAKING A COMMITMENT TO YOURSELF
Adapted from the Energizing Change Workshop, Equal Justice Conference 2010

1. Write down three things you could do to address issues of self-care, including compassion fatigue/vicarious traumatization for each arena: professional, organizational, and personal.

   Professional
   
   1. ____________________________________________
   2. ____________________________________________
   3. ____________________________________________

   Organizational
   
   1. ____________________________________________
   2. ____________________________________________
   3. ____________________________________________

   Personal
   
   1. ____________________________________________
   2. ____________________________________________
   3. ____________________________________________

2. Next, place an asterisk beside every strategy you could implement during the next month.

3. Then, circle one in each category that will try to do during the next week.
REWARDS OF YOUR WORK

Make a list of the rewards of your work.

Have you grown and changed in positive ways?

What have you learned?

What has moved you?

What strengths do you bring to this work?

How have you made a difference to others?

What successes have you and your clients shared?

What has made you laugh?

Reread this list and do it regularly.
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Why should you as lawyers be concerned about compassion fatigue?

- Can be emotionally and professionally devastating
- Lawyers lead the nation with the highest incidence of depression
- Difficult to recognize unless aware of CF, STS, VT
- Lack of recognition prevents positive coping
Compassion fatigue model

- Developed by Charles Figley with a focus in nursing
- CF is progressive and cumulative
  - Repeated combination—Cost of Caring
  - "Compassion fatigue is a state where the compassion energy that is expanded has surpassed restorative processes."
  - (Cortese, 2010)

What are sign and symptoms of CF?

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- 
- 

Signs and symptoms of CF or other effects

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Action plan: MY self-care ideas

Strategies to avoid

Suggestions on ways to use the information from this session
Dealing with Compassion Fatigue: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

David H.K. Nguyen, Moderator

Speakers:
Jeffrey Fortgang, Ph.D.
Zelideh Martinez Hoy, Ph.D.

Sponsors:
• Young Lawyers Division
• Disaster Legal Services Program
• Special Committee for Disaster Response & Preparedness
• Commission for Lawyer Assistance Programs

2014 ABA Annual Meeting
Boston, MA
DLS Biography of David H.K. Nguyen

David H.K. Nguyen has served as director of Disaster Legal Services, a partnership program between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the American Bar Association (ABA), since 2010. A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, David earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) in secondary education, Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD), and Master of Business Administration (MBA) all from Indiana University. As a recipient of the Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship, David earned his Master of Advanced Legal Studies (LL.M. Adv.) in European business law from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

David is a partner of Sniderman Nguyen LLP practicing in education law, family, immigration, and small business transactions and litigation and serving the immigrant Vietnamese population in Indiana and throughout the Midwest. Previously, David worked in Indianapolis-based law firms, the federal courts, and state government. In 2006, David was a delegation member on the 2006 Indiana Food & Agriculture Trade Mission Trip to Taiwan and Vietnam. David also served as a legal consultant researching the issues of data protection in medical research and drafted proposals to be presented to the European Commission. In addition, David was a visiting professor of business ethics at Vietnam National University, and a lecturer at the International Business & Law Academy, both in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. David is admitted to practice law in the State of Indiana and its federal courts.

In addition to his legal practice, David is pursuing a doctorate (Ph.D.) at Indiana University Bloomington in education policy while researching and teaching courses in education law. David is also a member of the ABA Special Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness.
Biography of Jeffrey Fortgang, Ph.D.

Jeffrey Fortgang, Ph.D., LADC–I
Dr. Jeff Fortgang got his undergraduate degree at Yale and a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Adelphi University. His career has included positions in many Boston area hospitals and clinics, with an emphasis on treatment of alcoholism, addiction, as well as depression and trauma. He joined the staff of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers in 1998. He also maintains a private practice and is a Clinical Associate in psychology at Harvard Medical School.
Biography of Zelideh Martinez Hoy, Ph.D.

Zelideh Martinez Hoy, PhD, earned her PhD in health behavior, and MS.Ed. in higher education and student affairs from Indiana University Bloomington, where her graduate training focused on qualitative methods, health concerns in the Latino community, cultural health competencies, and issues impacting workplace health in higher education.

As a public health practitioner, she has coordinated and implemented health programs using multi-component and multi-setting approaches. In her immediate community, she is a facilitator of the Bienvenido program, a strengths-based mental health program focused on reducing reliance on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for individuals at risk for abuse and dependence due to stress associated with ongoing marginalized community social status.

Her pedagogical experiences coupled with her passion for building agency have shaped her philosophy and practice on teaching and learning.