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Effects of a Compassion Fatigue Workshop on Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses

Johnnie Bower, BSN;  Mary Johnson, DNP, PMHNP-BC

**BACKGROUND**
- Compassion fatigue (CF) happens when caregivers (i.e., nurses, SW, police, etc.) are repeatedly exposed to the trauma/distress of others.¹ ²
- Signs/sx: avoidance, irritability, trouble concentrating, somatic issues, depression, increased absenteeism, and others.³
- Self-care and mindfulness have been shown to increase resilience and the capacity to cope with vicarious trauma & distress.³ ⁴ ⁵
- Scant research on effects of institutional teaching of nurses about CF and how to combat it.
- Behavioral health nurses may be particularly susceptible.⁶ ⁷ ⁸

**LOCAL PROBLEM**
- Project site:
  - acute care psychiatric hospital
  - high risk of CF among PMH nurses, therefore, hypothetically true for this facility
  - children, adolescents, & adults
  - 93 staffed beds, ~ 50 nurses employed, ~ 7-10 per shift
- Problem statement: In psychiatric mental health (PMH) nurses, how does a CF workshop affect the nurses’ perceptions of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress?

**METHODS**
- The Practice question, Evidence, and Translation (PET) project management guide of the Johns Hopkins Nursing Evidence-Based Practice (JHNEBP) model provided the guidance and structure of the project development. *
- Literature search and critical appraisal demonstrated that there is good and consistent evidence to implement a CF workshop for PMH nurses and to use the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) tool for assessment.
- There is also strong, compelling evidence to suggest that including self-care techniques in the intervention will increase nurse resilience.

**RESULTS**
- Participants accessed the ProQOL survey through Qualtrics.
- After answering the questions, participants started a 30-minute video:
  - What is CF and how does it affect us?
  - How many of us experience CF?
  - Learn techniques and resources for combatting CF.
- After viewing the video, participants immediately re-take the ProQOL survey, then again at two- and four-week intervals.
- The final surveys also ask if participants have been using any of the self-care techniques they learned in the CF video.

**CONCLUSIONS**
- Although the findings may not meet stringent clinical significance, they still possess practical relevance and potential implications for real-world applications.
- Potential benefits for improved nurse, patient, and organizational satisfaction.
- Due to low participation, sustainability at this site may not be currently feasible; however, following the next steps may increase sustainability.
- Next steps: explore ways to improve participation, expand to other specialties and occupations.