"I'm fine." (but not really)

- Anita Fischer, Chaplain

It begins with a purpose

Burnout

• A state of dissatisfaction with one’s work.
• A response to the work environment and factors associated within a work system.
• A feeling of powerlessness.
• Typically, burnout begins gradually and progresses as continued stressors continue.
• Symptoms of burnout look like:
  • Irritability
  • Inability to concentrate
  • Low energy or boredom
  • Increased illness, frequent absences
  • Use of unhealthy coping mechanisms (alcohol, drugs, overeating, etc.)
  • Thoughts of quitting one’s job.

Trauma Exposure Response or Second Victim

A transformation that takes place within us as a result of exposure to the suffering of other living beings or the planet.

• Deliberate or inadvertent
• Formal or informal contact
• Paid or volunteer work

The world looks and feels different as a result of what you experience.

Critical to examine our own responses because how we are impacted by our work in the present directly affects our work in the future.

Van DenOord Lipsky, 41-42

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue: profound emotional and physical erosion that takes place when helpers are unable to refuel and regenerate (Mathieu, 14).

Some symptoms include:
• Forgetfulness, short attention span, losing things
• Anger too frequent or intense for the situation
• Easily startled, feeling on edge
• Difficulty falling / staying asleep
• Depression, feeling of hopelessness
• Guilt
• Apathy – lack of empathy
• Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach issues, fatigue)

Discussion

• Have you ever experienced symptoms of burnout / compassion fatigue / trauma exposure?
  • What did that look like for you?
• Have you reflected on trauma within the church?
  • How has this affected you in your work, spiritual life, social life?
• Have you felt particularly connected to someone because of what they are going through?
  • How have you created appropriate boundaries with that person?
• What causes you to feel overwhelmed?
  • At work, at home, at church
• What triggers might you experience in your work that could bring up significant events from your own past?
What is Resilience?

Internet Definition: Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

My Definition: The ability to restore equilibrium (balance) after distressing / stressful events
- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Social
- Not “one size fits all”

Strategies for Resilience

- What tools in your life have you found that helps you to release stress?
- What can you do at the end of a stressful day to leave work at work? What about home at home?
  - Personal / Professional rituals
  - Mantras / Meditation / Prayer
- In what ways can you lift each other up in your work?
- What does your “self talk” look like when you feel you have made a mistake or “failed.”

Professional Strategies for Resilience

- Accept your reactions as normal.
- Support system – a safe place to vent
- Professional feedback and discussion
- Professional recognition
- Regular debriefing
- Group counseling
- Acknowledge grief when experiencing a loss
- Maintain professional boundaries and set limits.
- Professional rituals – leave work at work

Personal Strategies for Resilience

- Solitude
- Find time for breaks / vacation
- Examine, “What can I change and what can’t I change?”
- Eat healthy and exercise. Get enough sleep.
- Nurture supportive relationships:
  - family, friends, professional colleagues.
- Nurture your spirituality
  - Engage in meditative activities – reboot!
- Rediscover your roots.
- Recommit yourself to ministry yearly (Chrism Mass)
- Remember the value, importance and meaning of your work.
- Continuous reframing
  - seeing positive amongst the negative
- Sense of humor © Ability to laugh at oneself

When all else fails, laugh a little
Sources


• Kelly, L.A, RN, PhD, and Lefton, C, RN, PhD, 2017, 'Effect of Meaningful Recognition on Critical Care Nurses' Compassion Fatigue', American Journal of Critical Care 26 (6).

