Compassion Fatigue in the Presence of Employee Engagement
Carrie Roberts, MSN, RN

Background
- 80% of all acute care nurses report some level of compassion fatigue.
- Compassion Fatigue is the negative outcome, while Compassion Satisfaction is the positive outcome of repeated exposure to nursing acutely ill patients.
- Employee engagement surveys are routinely used in measuring the quality of professional life at practicum site.
- No standard screening for compassion satisfaction currently in use in nursing practice
- Outcomes of exposure to acutely ill patients are of strategic concern to nursing administration.

Research Question
Question: Does the current standard of the use of employee engagement surveys provide nursing administration the needed insight to maintain the caring culture of their practice environments? 

Hypothesis: There is an inverse relationship between employee engagement scores and compassion fatigue.

Variables: Independent Variable defined as employee engagement scores. The dependent variable defined as compassion satisfaction experienced in practice by acute care nurses.

Related Concepts
Concepts investigated through relevant literature for concepts integral to study:
- Caring Science
- Employee Engagement
- Development of Compassionate Self
- Acute Care Nursing Practice
- Ethical Foundation of Care
- Gaps and Limitations of Literature

Methodology
- Non experimental quantitative design
- Convenience sample of acute care nurses
- Cross sectional survey using validated tool
- Project description and invitation to participate announced at staff meeting March 27, 2018, both night and day shift available.
- Data evaluated using the statistical approach outlined by the ProQOL Concise Manual by Stamm and graphed.
- Results of survey compared to employee engagement data for the last two years.

Data Tools

Table 1. Study Instrument | Cronbach’s α | No. of Items (Likert)
--- | --- | ---
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL 5) - Stamm | 0.88 | 10
Compassion Satisfaction | 0.75 | 10
Burn Out | 0.81 | 10
Secondary Stress | 0.82 | 13
Employee Engagement | 0.80 | 10

Findings
- Compassion Satisfaction scores high with low burn out and secondary stress results. Highest positive results obtainable.
- Employee engagement scores high past two years.
- Relationship identified between high employee engagement and compassion satisfaction on unit surveyed.
- Application of employee engagement surveys to determine caring culture of nursing units feasible in the presence of high employee engagement.

Relevance to Nursing Administration
- Outcome metrics related to patient satisfaction, safety, and staff engagement can be linked to compassion fatigue
- Nursing administration’s responsibility to provide a caring reality to their nurses requires tools to identify and prevent the development of compassion fatigue and promote compassion satisfaction on their unit.
- Further research is needed in the areas of compassion fatigue and employee engagement in nursing.

Limitations
- Non experimental quantitative design
- Convenience sample of acute care nurses
- Cross sectional survey using validated tool
- Project description and invitation to participate announced at staff meeting March 27, 2018, both night and day shift available.
- Data evaluated using the statistical approach outlined by the ProQOL Concise Manual by Stamm and graphed.
- Results of survey compared to employee engagement data for the last two years.

Note. Using the ProQOL 5 Concise Manual (Stamm, 2010), participant scores were calculated. The x axis is the participant line and the y axis is the score 0-50 of the proQOL survey. The green color represents scores indicating compassion satisfaction, the blue line represents Burn Out, the orange line represents scores of Secondary Trauma Stress. The graph highlights the most positive test results for the participant: high compassion satisfaction with low burnout and low secondary stress trauma

Empy Data Tool

Conclusion
- The theory structure highlights how the acute care nurse moves through the professional quality of life theory.
- Nursing Administration role in promoting best outcomes is crucial and depends on leadership abilities.
- Continued negative outcomes related to exposure of acutely ill patients can lead to Secondary Trauma or Burn Out, which is classified as trauma.
- Traumatized by Work

Post Measure Results

Limitations
- Limited timeframe of survey invitation
- Low respondent rates
- Limited time for survey invitation
- These limitations could be addressed in future studies.

Findings
- Compassion satisfaction scores high with low burn out and secondary stress results. Highest positive results obtainable.
- Employee engagement scores high past two years.
- Relationship identified between high employee engagement and compassion satisfaction on unit surveyed.
- Application of employee engagement surveys to determine caring culture of nursing units feasible in the presence of high employee engagement.

Relevance to Nursing Administration
- Outcome metrics related to patient satisfaction, safety, and staff engagement can be linked to compassion fatigue
- Nursing administration’s responsibility to provide a caring reality to their nurses requires tools to identify and prevent the development of compassion fatigue and promote compassion satisfaction on their unit.
- Further research is needed in the areas of compassion fatigue and employee engagement in nursing.

Limitations
- Non experimental quantitative design
- Convenience sample of acute care nurses
- Cross sectional survey using validated tool
- Project description and invitation to participate announced at staff meeting March 27, 2018, both night and day shift available.
- Data evaluated using the statistical approach outlined by the ProQOL Concise Manual by Stamm and graphed.
- Results of survey compared to employee engagement data for the last two years.