The Watson Room: Managing Compassion Fatigue and Clinical Nurses on the Front Line

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No Conflicts of Interest
Objectives

- Bring awareness to nurses in recognizing and treating compassion fatigue
- Describe symptoms of Compassion Fatigue
- Identify strategies to increase resiliency at work place
Background

Compassion Fatigue

- Concept emerged in the early 90’s
- Precursor to burn out
- Symptoms develop over time
- Impact on job satisfaction
- A better understanding is needed
Compassion Fatigue

- Environmental stressors
- Patients physical/emotional needs
- Increase workload/understaffed

Deep physical & emotional exhaustion
Change empathy for others
No work-life balance
Increase turnover and sick days
Loss of mature, knowledgeable nursing staff
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burnout</strong></td>
<td>Inability to perform clinical work appropriately due to emotional exhaustion, frustration, lack of enthusiasm and motivation, associated with increased workload and institutional stress, <strong>NOT</strong> trauma-related, emerges over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Traumatic Stress</strong></td>
<td>Negative psychological and emotional effects immediately experienced or witnessed working with clients dealing with trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compassion Fatigue</strong></td>
<td>Deep physical and emotional exhaustion and a pronounced change in the helper’s ability to feel empathy for their patients, their loved ones and their co-workers. It differs from burn-out, but can co-exist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compassion Fatigue may cause:

- Low morale and motivation
- Behavior and judgment impaired
- Increasing transference/counter issues
- Poor communication
- Staff conflicts

- Apathy
- Absenteeism
- Withdrawal
- Late for work
- Depleted
- Overly sensitive
- Sleep disturbance
- Cognitive ability decreases
Compassion Fatigue

- Natural, predictable, treatable, and unpreventable consequence of working with suffering and traumatized patients
- Warning signs and symptoms can go unrecognized
- Interventions to recognize and manage stressors, retain nurses, and improve the work environment must be identified
Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass
It’s about learning to dance
In the Rain
Recognizing and providing stress free environment may prevent compassion fatigue.
Pilot Study
Methods

IRB approval
02-01-16-0260922

DESIGN: Single-group pre and post-survey
SETTING: Acute Care Surgery, Level 1 Trauma Center
SUBJECTS: A convenience sample of 19 nurses
PROCEDURE: Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) pre- and post-survey via online

• The ProQOL operationalizes in three subcategories: compassion satisfaction (10 items), burnout (10 items), secondary trauma/CF (10 items)

STATISTICS: Paired t test - measure mean differences using JMP statistical software
Offer staff a “stress free and technology free zone” to take a few minutes to decompress at any time of day

THE WATSON ROOM

Pilot Study

Methods

Creating a healthy work environment
Making of the Watson Room
## Pilot Study Results

### Pre/Post Comparison of ProQOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>PRE</th>
<th>POST</th>
<th>P-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion Satisfaction Scale</td>
<td>40.3 ± 4.7</td>
<td>42.6 ± 5.4</td>
<td>0.0095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn out Scale</td>
<td>22.9 ± 3.6</td>
<td>19.5 ± 4.4</td>
<td>0.0021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Trauma Scale/Compassion Fatigue</td>
<td>22.6 ± 5.1</td>
<td>19.5 ± 4.8</td>
<td>0.0172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Using a paired t-test
## Pilot Study

### Feedback From Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Comments</th>
<th>Negative Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wonderful way to escape stress on the job</td>
<td>Better hand-off when using the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing way to relax in stressful environment</td>
<td>Calf massage was painful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt so Zen</td>
<td>Need a reminder to turn off light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great! Felt like I wasn’t at work for 10 minutes</td>
<td>Acuity too high to use Watson Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The room and chair is EVERYTHING!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very peaceful and relaxing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truly amazing!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So nice to look forward to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great investment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Understanding Compassion Fatigue

Nurses taking care of themselves while taking care of others

The creation of the Watson Room is easy to replicate, low cost, and support from senior nursing leadership to promote healthy work environment
How to create a healthy work environment?

- **Determine the purpose of your space**
  To have a private place for nurses to seek inner calm and clarity.

- **Find a pre-existing space**
  You don’t need a large space.

- **Decorate your space**
  Comfortable seating, white noise, waterfall fountains, and soothing scents, warm wall colors.

- **Make your space sacred**
  You should associate this area with stillness, with special time for yourself. Only use this space for rest, yoga, meditation, or quiet time.
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Questions

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References available upon request