

Joint Event

Public Health, Women's Health, Nursing and Hospital Management

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Combatting compassion fatigue: The care professional's resilience program

Articulated as the cost of caring for clients that have experienced trauma (Figley, 1995), the phenomenon of compassion fatigue (CF) also known as secondary traumatic stress (STS), is presented from a study of empirical research relating to CF among care professionals. The research uncovered, the symptoms, prevalence, risk factors and best practice interventions identified to alleviate individual experiences and symptoms of CF. Populations explored include; nursing, counselling, social work, hospice care, residential care, mental health and military health care professionals. The research informed the development of an evidence based program, combatting compassion fatigue; the care professional's resilience program. The program incorporates a combination of best practice interventions to educate, develop self-care, and develop emotional intelligence and problem solving capability to foster resilience, reduce the risk and alleviate experiences of CF. An independent pilot study of the program facilitated using the Eagala Model, occurred with a purposeful sample of 10 community care professionals (CCPs) working in residential care facilities in northern new south wales who self-nominated to participate in the program. Pre and post assessment occurred using the professional quality of life (ProQOL) scale (Stamm, 2010), as a screening tool and the Genos emotional intelligence self-test (Genos, 2015) to understand emotional intelligence factors. An analysis of the variance between the pre and post tests revealed ProQOL scores for compassion fatigue and burnout decreased whilst compassion satisfaction scores increased. The Genos emotional intelligence analysis found a statistically significant improvement in overall emotional intelligence ($p > 0.05$) and statistically significant improvements ($p > 0.05$) in the emotional intelligence factors of emotion self-management, emotional expression, emotion self-control and emotion awareness of others. Understanding the increasing demands, high staff turnover and limited capacity to release care professionals from their workplace, further research has commenced to undertake a clinical trial of the Combatting Compassion Fatigue. Care professionals resilience program facilitated in a blended learning mode using workshops, online learning and support resources to optimize access and engagement in the program for nursing healthcare professionals in highly demanding, high stress and high stakes environments.

Biography

Michelle Black is a Consultant, Educator and EAP Practitioner. She is an Advocate for leveraging the evidence to solve industry problems. She developed Australia's first evidence based program to combat compassion fatigue among community care professionals and has more than 20 years' of experience in leading organizational development and change in the commercial, government and not for profit sectors. She is a Registered Counsellor and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Training and Development. She has a Master of Counselling and a graduate certificate in Corporate Management. As an Advocate for people thriving in the workplace, she has presented research on Compassion Fatigue at a number of national and international conferences and published peer reviewed articles in the Counselling Australia Journal and the Australian New Zealand 17th International Mental Health Conference papers. She is a PhD student at the University of Queensland and continues to advance the research on Compassion Fatigue.

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