

Compassion Fatigue

Organisational and individual strategies to prevent burn-out and fatigue amongst volunteers.

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It's really quite simple!!

- BUT ARE OUR ORGANISATIONS AND PERSONNEL FOLLOWING THESE SIMPLE RULES?

What is Compassion Fatigue / Vicarious Trauma?

Over time hearing the trauma, anxiety and distress of others may change;

- People's perspective on life;
- Their faith in society;
- Their health

Why take it Serious?

- Can effect health of volunteers
- Can effect their productivity
- Can effect quality of service
- Can effect team morale
- Can lead to volunteer turnover
- Needless recruitment and training costs
- Can damage your reputation
- Can mean you breach health and safety laws

What should volunteers do?

- Be aware of the impact of others' trauma can have on them.
- Be self-aware
- Protect themselves by being realistic about workload
- Offload after a traumatic session
- Insist on regular support and supervision.
- Take breaks as needed
- Feel able to say no.
- Ask for feedback and have trust with your manager.
- Develop health coping mechanisms

How can managers help?

- Regular support
- Build trust and openly discuss how the sessions make volunteers feel
- Monitor workload and impact and encourage breaks
- Ensure volunteers are monitoring their own wellbeing
- Ensure you have sufficient volunteers and spread the workload
- Positive strokes – not all task focussed.
- Team work
- Recognise fatigue when they see it.
- Give volunteers control.

Organisational responsibility

- Monitor support rates
- Have clear policy
- Train managers and volunteers
- Provide feedback
- Invest in sufficient volunteers
- Monitor workload
- Monitor turnover
- Trust volunteers and give them control over their work – positive culture.
- Careful selection
- External support if needed.