



Webinar Summary: Compassion Fatigue

May 13, 2024

The webinar, organized by the Alliance for Nevada Nonprofits, discussed compassion fatigue, a prevalent issue in the nonprofit sector. The event aimed to provide valuable insights and practical tools for nonprofit professionals to manage their well-being while supporting others. Specifically, it aimed to help participants recognize and deal with compassion fatigue by teaching effective strategies for prevention and management.

Moderator:

Kimberly Kindig

Board Member, Alliance for Nevada Nonprofits

Facilitator:

Anne “Annie” Weisman

Director of Wellbeing and Integrative Medicine, UNLV School of Medicine

Introduction of the Facilitator

- **Annie’s Background:** Annie shared her professional background, starting as a waitress to support her nonprofit work, which led her to massage therapy and ultimately to her current role. Her work with people living with HIV/AIDS and in hospices deeply influenced her understanding of compassion. Annie reflected on her near-fatal accident and traumatic brain injury, which shifted her life path and underscored the importance of self-care in her healing process.

Interactive Breathing Exercise

- **Breathing Exercise:** Annie guided participants through a breathing exercise to ground themselves, emphasizing the importance of being present and calming the nervous system. Participants were encouraged to close their eyes, focus on their breath, and imagine themselves in a protective bubble to shield their energy. *Please see attached script.*



Participant Introductions

- **Participant Introductions:** Annie facilitated a round of introductions, allowing attendees to share their names, roles, and personal anecdotes. This exercise fostered a sense of community and connection among participants.
 - Participants included representatives from various nonprofit organizations such as Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation, Signs of HOPE, and Opportunity Village.
 - Many shared their professional roles, personal interests, and even details about their pets, creating a warm and engaging atmosphere.

Discussion on Compassion Fatigue

- **Experiences of Compassion Fatigue:** Annie invited participants to share their experiences with burnout and compassion fatigue. Several attendees discussed the challenges of managing large events, balancing personal and professional lives, and the guilt associated with feeling overwhelmed.
- **Self-Care Techniques:** Participants exchanged strategies for managing compassion fatigue, such as grounding exercises, mindfulness practices, and prioritizing self-care activities like meditation, yoga, and healthy eating.

Grounding and Centering Techniques

- **Grounding Exercise:** Annie led another grounding exercise to help participants center themselves. This included visualizing roots growing from their feet into the earth, connecting with a sense of stability, and creating a protective bubble around them.
- **Practical Tips:** Annie emphasized simple yet effective techniques like rolling feet on the ground, holding wrists, and washing hands to release stress. These practices help maintain personal boundaries and manage emotional energy.

Creating Rituals

- Creating rituals help mark time and progress, which can keep us present. By being in the present moment, we can reduce anxiety, tension, and stress.



- Examples of rituals during the work day might include taking a couple of deep breaths before and after meetings with clients. Another example includes touching door frames before you cross into a client's space to remind yourself to check your energy at the door.
- Annie spoke of the importance of night-time routine to release the stresses and anxieties of the day, such as gratitude journaling, meditation or other self-care practices like baths, etc.

Additional Resources

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/compassion-fatigue>

<https://cmbm.org/mind-body-resources/>