

Development of a Compassion Fatigue Education Program for Registered Nurses

Monique DeNysschen, DNP Population Health Program
Washington State University

Abstract

Background. Compassion fatigue is described as an emotional effect of being indirectly traumatized by caring for others through traumatic events or situations (Figley, 2002).

Nurses lack the knowledge to identifying compassion fatigue; prevention strategies, risk factors, and available resources to successfully mitigate the symptoms of compassion fatigue (Gentry, Baggerly, Baranowsky, 2004).

Methodology. The purpose of this project was to develop a compassion fatigue education program for all registered nurses. This educational module includes evidence based strategies, and resources to manage compassion fatigue for all registered nurses within the hospital setting.

Results. Twenty-six registered nurses completed the educational module and completed a formative evaluation. Nineteen participants were from Washington State University's Spokane location, and seven participants (nurse managers) from Sacred Heart Medical Center located in Spokane, WA. Evaluators indicated that the educational intervention

was applicable and effective in providing motivation and content needed to understand, identify, and manage compassion fatigue. Findings in relation to an increase in a better understanding of what Compassion Fatigue (CF) is showed that 60% of respondents strongly agreed after the first presentation; the second presentation indicated that 77.78% of respondents strongly agreed. The third time the presentation was given, 83.71% of respondents strongly agreed.

Implication for Practice. The compassion fatigue education program is particularly valuable because while it provides evidence based strategies and resources for nurses to manage compassion fatigue; it simultaneously provides the ability and resources for nurses to help identify compassion fatigue in others. In an effort to extend this compassion fatigue education program it will be offered as a CEU through Washington State Nurses Association.