

Compassion Fatigue: Trauma and the Cost of Caring

Joyce Lyons, Ph.D., LPC

June 23, 2020

12:00 Pacific Time

The speaker has no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose.

The University of Idaho, WWAMI Medical Education Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The University of Idaho, WWAMI Medical Education Program designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in an activity.

Sponsored By



This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U77HP03022, for the WWAMI Area Health Education (WWAMI AHEC) Program Office and its five regional Centers in the total amount of \$679,700 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year (with a 1:1 total match of \$679,700 from non-federally funded governmental sources). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



COMPASSION FATIGUE

TRAUMA AND THE COST OF CARING

Joyce A. Lyons, PhD, LPC

The Cost of Caring



Paradigm

The boundaries, rules, and patterns that guide our thoughts and actions in certain situations.

Life Stress Test

- Previous 12-24 months.
- Measures susceptibility to stress related illnesses
 - Tension headaches
 - Acid indigestion
 - Loss of sleep
 - Ulcers
 - Cancer
 - Migraines
- Coping skills

Trauma Informed Care Principles:



Safety

Ensuring physical
and emotional
safety.

Common areas are
welcoming and
privacy is respected.

Trauma Informed Care Principles:

Choice

Individual has choice and control.

Individuals are provided clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities.

Trauma Informed Care Principles:



Collaboration

Making decisions with
the individual and
sharing power.

Individuals are
provided a significant
role in planning and
evaluating services.

Trauma Informed Care Principles:



Trustworthiness

Task clarity,
consistency and
Interpersonal
Boundaries.

Respectful and
professional
boundaries are
maintained.

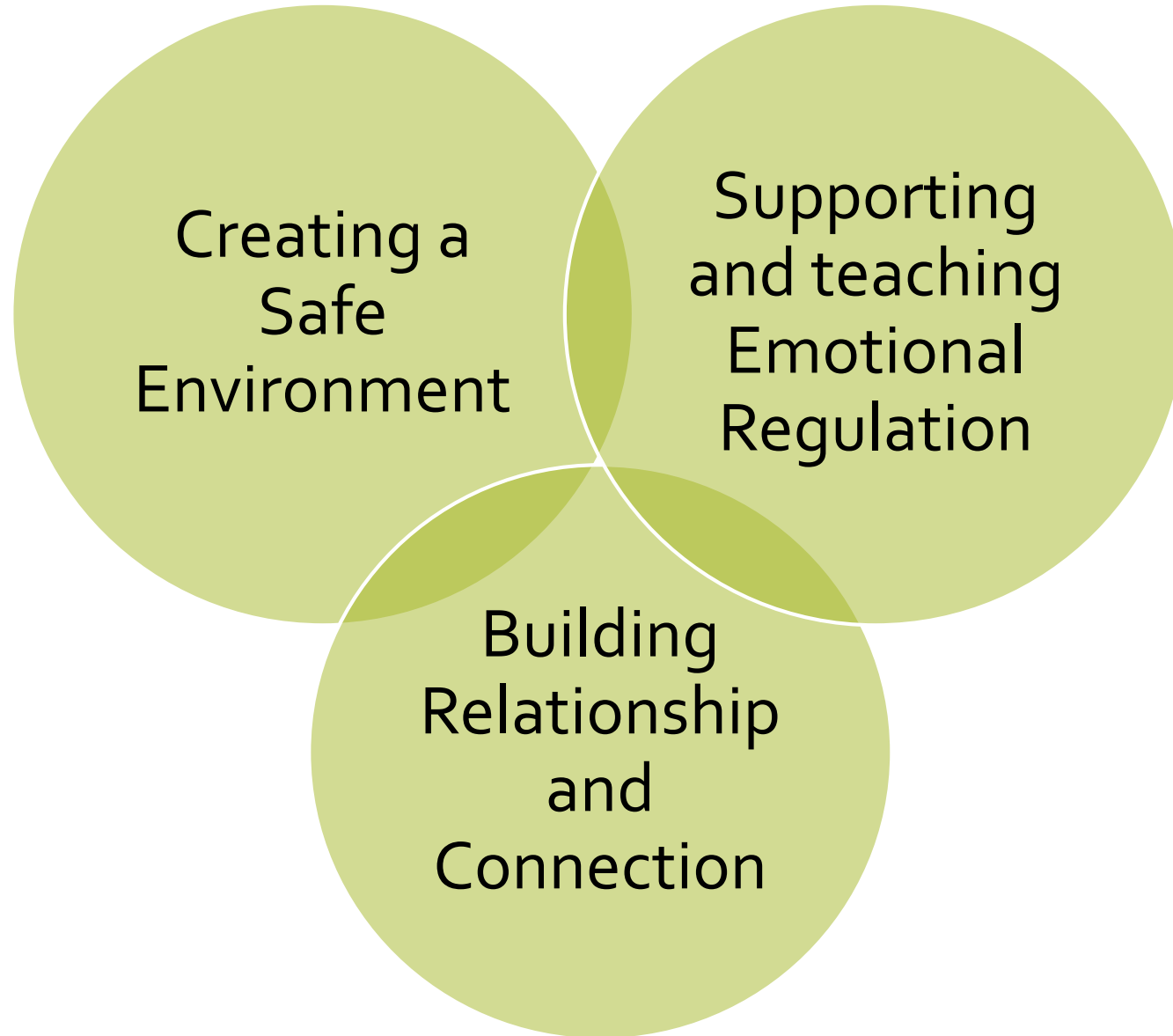
Trauma Informed Care Principles:



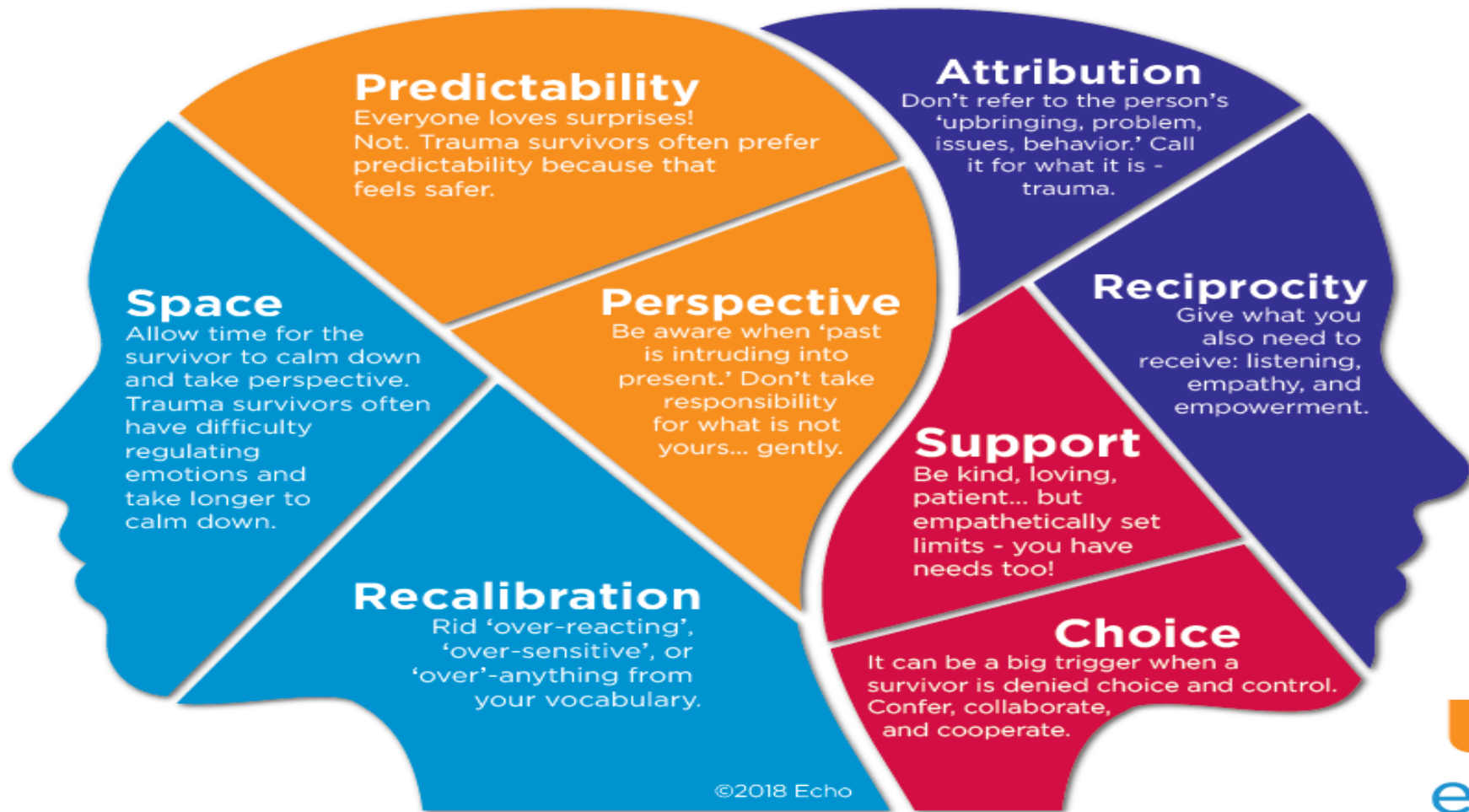
Empowerment

Prioritizing
empowerment and skill
building

Creating an
environment that allows
individuals to feel
validated and affirmed.



How to Support Someone Who Has Experienced Trauma



©2018 Echo

Trauma

Trauma: (noun)

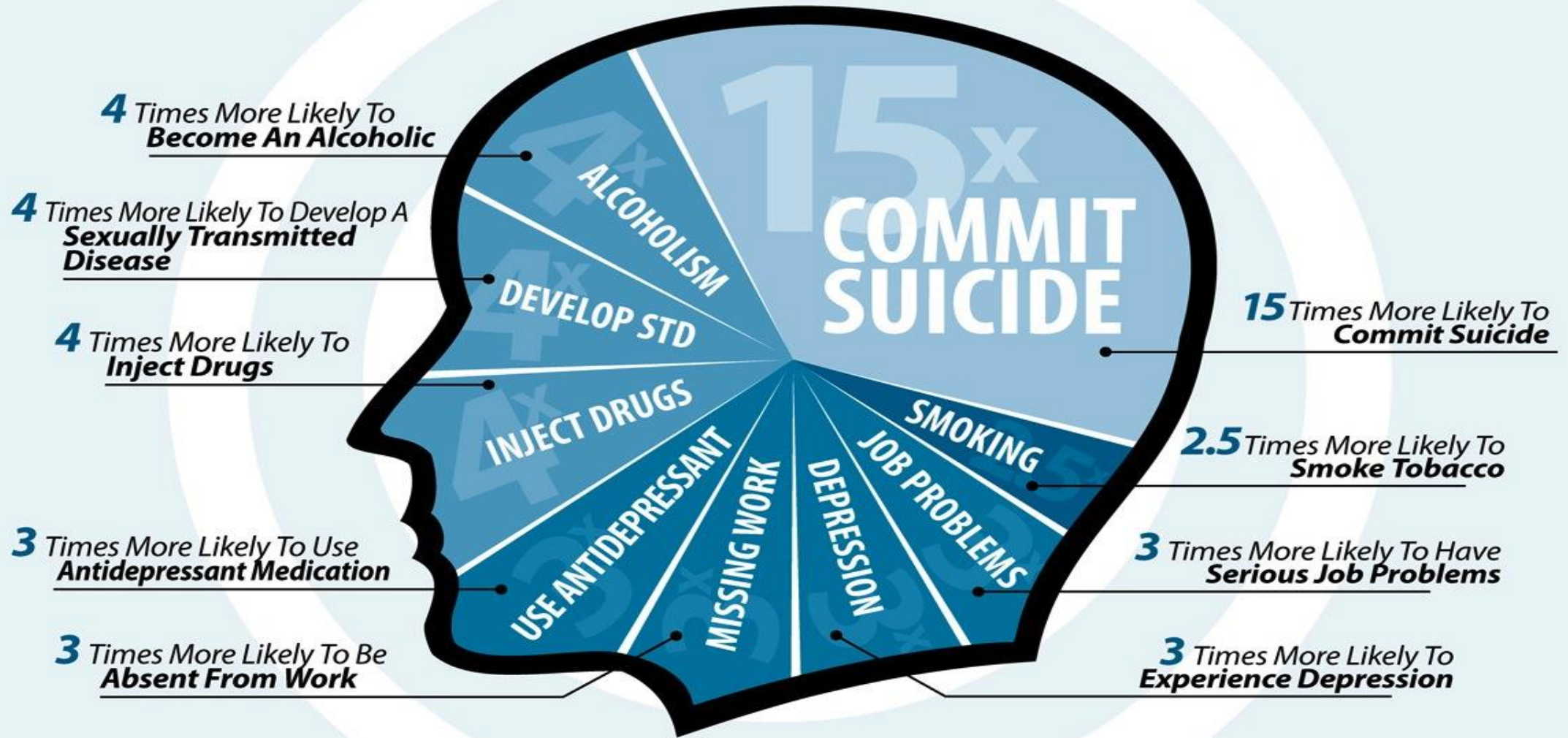
Definition: a deeply distressing or disturbing experience or unexpected physical injury. Sudden, dangerous, and overwhelming – remarkably common.

Traumatic: (adjective)

Definition: emotionally disturbing or distressing.

Synonyms: Disturbing, shocking, distressing, disquieting, upsetting, damaging, scarring, injurious, harmful, hurtful, painful, agonizing, awful, chilling, alarming, devastating, harrowing, excruciating, horrifying, terrifying, lowing.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA ARE:



The Cost of Caring

Trauma

Primary – Something happening to you.

Something you are carrying with you from your past (child abuse, neglect, war, motor vehicle accident, traumatic loss, work related exposure, first responders, fire fighters).

The Cost of Caring

Secondary – Secondary exposure to trauma.

Something bad happens to someone else and you hear about it. **Secondary trauma** is defined as indirect exposure to **trauma** through a firsthand account or narrative of a **traumatic** event (verbally, audio/video, counseling, reading files, news).

The Cost of Caring

Primary and Secondary Trauma could
lead to PTSD.

The Cost of Caring

Vicarious – Something bad happens to someone else and you hear about it on a regular basis.

Vicarious traumatization (VT) is a transformation in the self of a **trauma** worker or helper that results from empathic engagement with **traumatized** clients and their reports of **traumatic** experiences. ... Its hallmark is intrusive thoughts, disrupted spirituality, or a disruption in the **trauma** workers' perceived meaning and hope.

The Cost of Caring

Burnout – Is the side effect of an unsatisfied worker or a toxic workplace.

Burnout is characterized by feelings of unhappiness, disconnectedness. It can include exhaustion, feelings of being overwhelmed, bogged down, being “out-of-touch” with the person he or she wants to be. Burnout may or may not be related to trauma. Burnout can often be addressed by changing jobs.

The Cost of Caring

Moral Distress – When policies or routines conflict with beliefs about patient care.

Moral distress occurs when we are told to do things that we fundamentally disagree with or are morally opposed.

- Discharge a patient prematurely
- Cut corners because of sheer volume of work
- Etc.

The Cost of Caring

- Poor work life balance
- Increased workload
- Lack of support
- Running on empty
- Self-awareness
- Education
- Self-care activities

The Cost of Caring

Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping.
- The “good stuff”
 - Enjoyment
 - Fulfillment
 - Purpose
 - Life – Work Balance

Compassion Fatigue

- The negative aspects of helping.
- The “bad stuff”
 - Exhaustion
 - Overwhelm
 - Resentment
 - Disengagement

The Cost of Caring

Compassion Satisfaction

- Compassion satisfaction is characterized by feeling satisfied by one's job and from the helping itself. It is characterized by people feeling invigorated by work that they like to do. They feel they can keep up with new technology and protocols. They experience happy thoughts, feel successful, are happy with the work they do, want to continue to do it, and believe they can make a difference.

The Cost of Caring

Compassion Fatigue

- Compassion fatigue is characterized by the negative aspects of providing care to those who have experienced extreme or traumatic stressors. These negative responses include feelings of being overwhelmed by the work that is distinguished from feelings of fear associated with the work.

Develop an Early Warning System

Physical Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Somatization

Develop an Early Warning System

Behavioral Signs of Compassion Fatigue

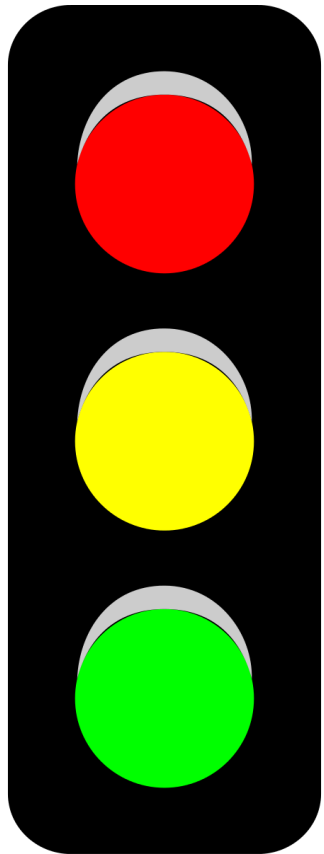
- Increased use of alcohol/drugs
- Absenteeism
- Anger and irritability
- Exaggerated sense of responsibility
- Forgetfulness
- Personal relationships

Develop an Early Warning System

Psychological Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Distancing
- Negative self-image
- Reduced ability to feel empathy
- Cynicism
- Resentment

Know your "RED" Zone

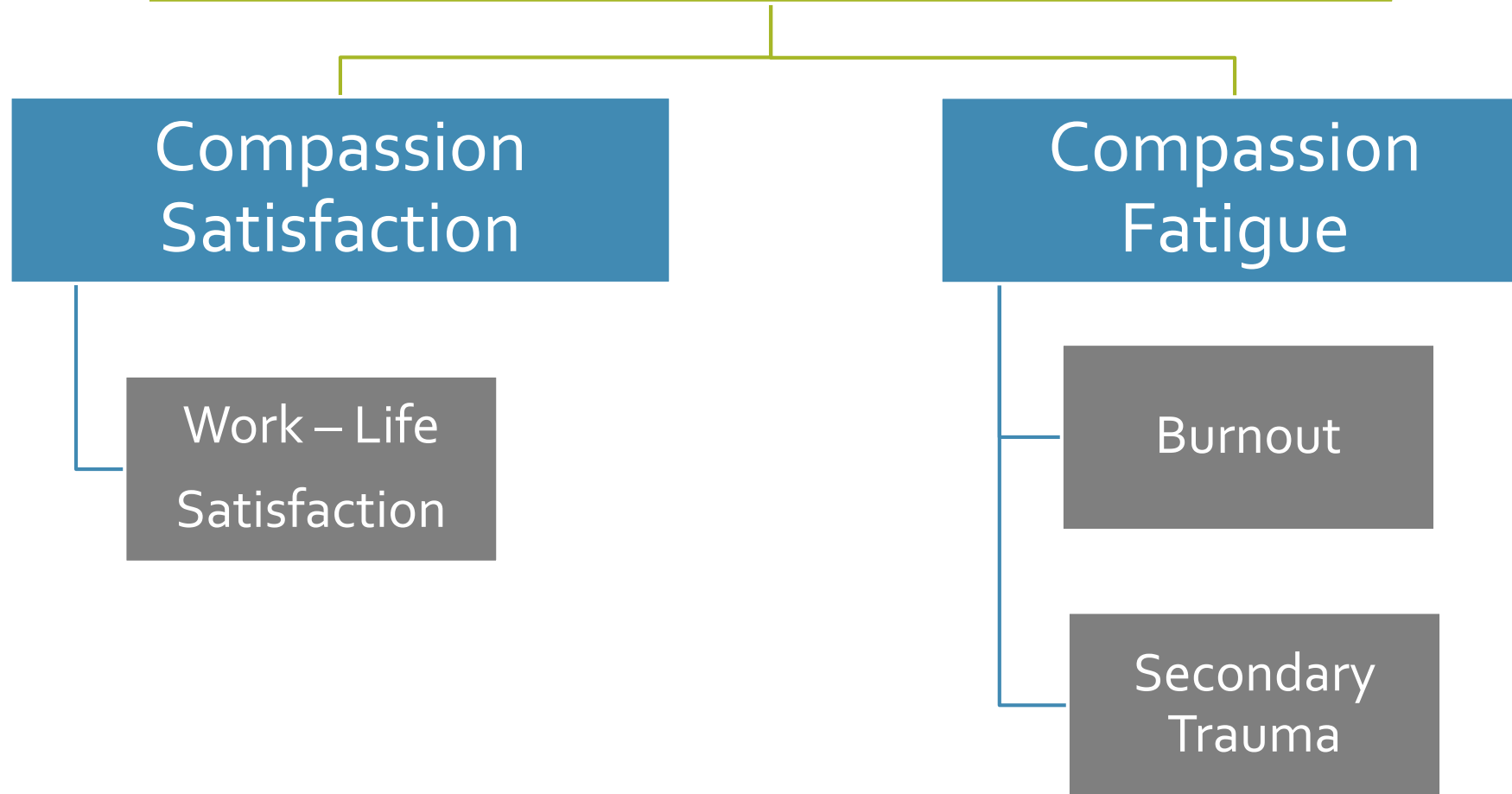


Compassion Fatigue - Total Crash

Getting slightly overloaded

Compassion Satisfaction

Professional Quality of Life



The Cost of Caring

Be your best!

Assess your current situation:

- Intervene
- Find a colleague
- Seek supervision

Resiliency and Moving Forward:

Work as smart for yourself as you do for others.

References:

- Figley, C.R. (Ed.). (1995) *Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Mathieu, F. (M.Ed.). (2007) *Running on Empty: Compassion fatigue in health professionals*. *Rehab & Community Care Medicine*, Spring 2007.
- Stamm, B.H. (Ed.). (1999). *Secondary traumatic stress: Self-care issues for clinicians, researchers, and educators*, 2nd Edition, Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press.
- Van Der Kock, Bessel, (M.D.). (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma*, Penguin Books, New York, NY.
- *van Dernoot Lipsky, L. (2018) The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the long haul*, Berrett-Kohler Publishers, Inc., Oakland, CA.