

# Coping with Grief and Compassion Fatigue



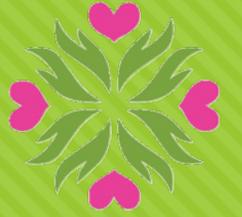
Islands Hospice  
A Nonprofit Health Care Provider

# Compassion Fatigue



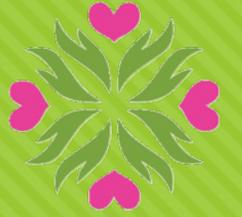
- Set of symptoms arising from long term or continuous care giving of one or multiple persons. Irritability, aches and pains, boredom and apathy, fatigue, sleep disruption, memory loss, depression.
- Origins often in formative years - learning to put others needs first, lack of boundaries.

# Tools to Combat Compassion Fatigue



- Be aware
- Caregivers Bill of Rights
- Regain Balance
- Exercise, eat healthy, get enough sleep, spiritual practices
- Take time for yourself –interest outside of work?
- Express yourself
- Build a support system
- Pets

# What NOT to do



- Blame others
- Make life changing decisions
- Self-medicate
- Work harder and longer hours
- Neglect your own needs

# What is Grief?



- Healthy natural reaction to a death or loss
- Each experience is unique
- Ongoing and influenced by many issues

# Disenfranchised Grief



- Failure of others to acknowledge or recognize a person's grief
- Leaves the bereaved isolated by society from normal grieving process

# Indicators of Disenfranchised Grief and Degree of Impact on a person

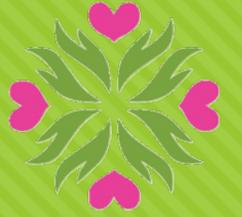


- Shame over one's emotions
- Sense that one is not allowed to grieve or does not need to grieve

Affect is dependent on:

- Circumstance of death
- Influence of others
- Acceptance and response to symptoms
- Understanding of the impact on oneself

# Ongoing Signs of Impact



- Recurrent and intrusive recollections of the event
- Generally non responsiveness-detached
- Professional burnout
- Depression and or Anxiety
- Emotional liability – no longer trust one's own relationships
- Spiritual distress

# Contributing Factors to Severity of Impact



- Speed of reoccurring events
- Violent or unexpected loss
- Intentionality
- Perception of suffering
- Degree of exposure-role/proximity
- Concurrent losses and stresses
- Proportion of community shared grief

# Assisting Co Workers thru a Death/Loss



- Listen
- Validate
- Ask What they need
- Don't Judge
- Don't offer platitudes

# Discussion

