

CHATS
Community & Home
Assistance to Seniors





MAINTAINING HEALTHY COMPASSION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND CAREGIVERS

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Rosalyn Carter

“There are only four kinds of people in the world—those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who need caregivers.”

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter of past US President Jimmy Carter



What's your story?

- Who are you beyond your profession?
- What are your roles and responsibilities?
- How did you come to this profession?



Case Study of a Professional

- Catherine Jacobs 45 years old
- Mother of two kids and married for 15 years
- Works as a social worker providing caregiver support
- Increasing work demands
- Becoming irritable with other staff
- Finding herself indifferent when talking to caregivers
- Has headaches often
- Frequently exhausted at the end of the day
- Increasingly missing appointments and calling in sick

Case Study of a Caregiver

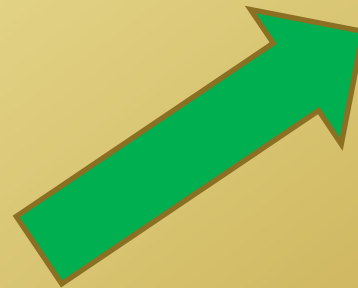
- Coleen Ohlan
- 50 years old
- Recently separated
- Caring for adult son with a developmental disability
- Caring for her mother who has dementia
- In the process of formally filing for divorce
- Sustaining livelihood through her savings
- Taking an extensive leave of absence from work

COMPASSION FATIGUE

CRISIS

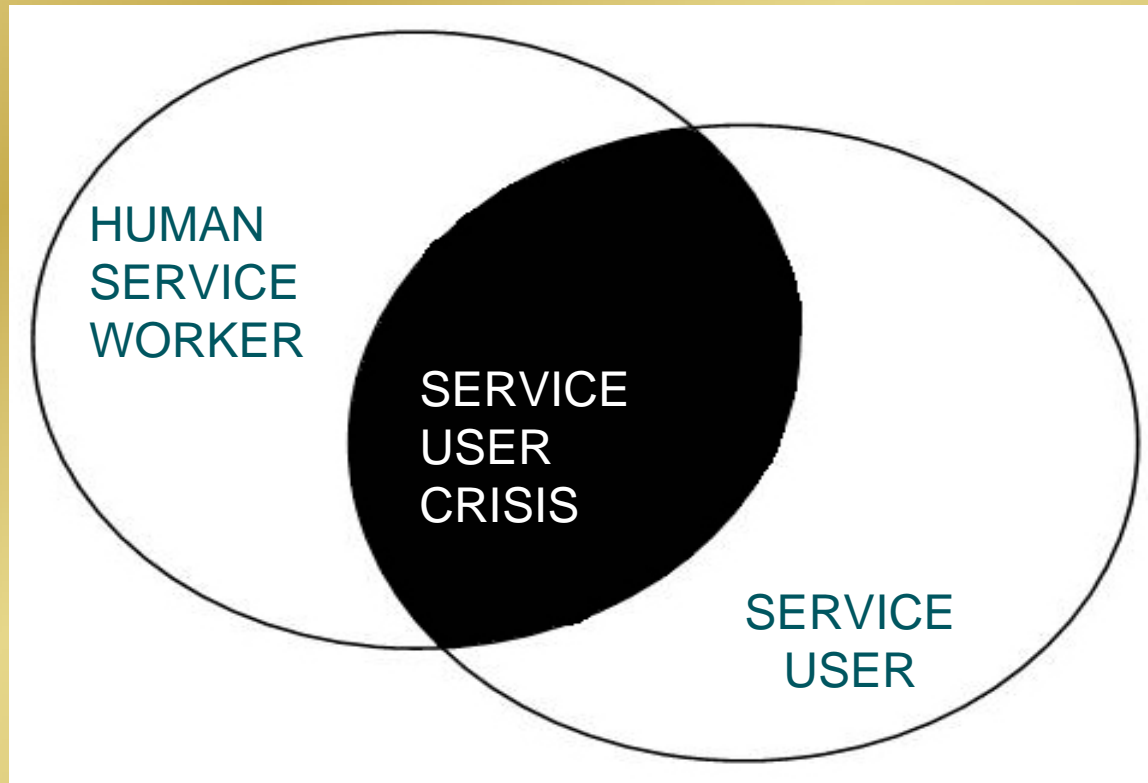


**REPETITIVE
EXPOSURE**



**HUMAN
SERVICE
WORKER**

SHARED EXPERIENCE FROM SERVICE USER



Statistics

- Costs of workplace stress and health challenges translate into some 70 million workdays missed by Canadian employees for personal reason (i.e. illness disability family etc.)

Baranowsky, 2005

- The annual cost to Canadian companies due to stress-related disorders is **\$12 billion**

- Absenteeism due to stress has increased by over 300% since 1995

Statistics Canada

Signs and Symptoms

- Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Absenteeism
- Increased use of alcohol
- Anger and irritability
- Silencing response
- Cynicism
- Diminished sense of enjoyment of career
- Unable to tolerate strong feelings
- Distancing
- Negative self image
- Silenced responses
- Difficulty in personal relationships
- Depression
- Resentment
- Failure to nurture

Sources: Saakvitne (1995), Figley, (1995), Gentry, Branowsky & Dunning (1997)

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Resilience

Helplessness

Asking for help

Lack of boundaries

Adhering to boundaries

Emotional Exhaustion

Enjoying activities

Absence of non-work related activities

Meaningful experience

Compassion Resilience

- Hardiness theory emphasizes on the value in being involved in it and in learning from the experience.
- Optimism theory emphasizes the expectation of positive outcomes and the control to participate in bringing them about.

Maddi and Hightower, 1999

How to become Compassion Resilient?

- Understand effects of Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL 5)
- http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html
- Scan your mind, body and spirit
- See handouts on Self-Care
- Encourage social support in the workplace
- Use Employment Assistance Program or counselling
- Implement a workplace wellness program (HR Council Canada 2010)
- Be passionate about activities outside the workplace

Challenge to Professionals.....

If caring for caregivers starts to feel like hard labour rather than a labour of love,

Professionals need to begin to take steps:

- talk to others
- discover ways to heal the healer within.

Showalter, 2010