

“Resilience is the antidote to compassion fatigue”

(Radey & Figley 2007)

Our profession enables us to learn and grow and provide significant help to others. However, it can also be overwhelming and stressful. We need wellness and self-care tools that are specialized for our unique situation.

We often work long hours in isolation. We may listen to horrific stories of trauma and provide a container for vast amounts of grief, anger, anxiety and fear. We may also experience the stress of micro-aggressions. In addition, unique to our profession is that we strive to be consistently present and compassionate with our clients and students but don't ask for support from them.

Figley (1995) noted the emergence of compassion stress and fatigue among professionals working with traumatized people. We can be even more vulnerable when we encounter life stressors like care-giving for a child, partner or parent, relationship or financial difficulties, loneliness, grief, chronic pain, illness or disability. It is vitally important for us, as psychology professionals, to strive to normalize and humanize our own personal struggles and those of our colleagues.

Some Signs of Impending Stress

- Impulsive and reactive behaviors
- Failure to return calls or write notes
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Alcohol and /or substance abuse

Some Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue:

Cognitive- lowered concentration, decreased self-esteem, apathy, perfectionism

Emotional- fear, sadness/depression, depletion, emotional exhaustion

Behavioral- Impatience, irritability, withdrawal, sleep disturbance, appetite changes

Personal Relationships- isolation, decreased intimacy, increased interpersonal conflicts

Somatic- headaches, stomach upset, fatigue, increased medical problems

Work Performance- negativity, feeling unappreciated, poor work commitment

You can find more references at:
Care.cpapsych.org

Resilience Approach to Self Care for Health Care Professionals

(Bridgeman 2009)

- Accept support from others.
- Adjust work schedule for a healthy balance of challenging clients with less demanding ones.
- Develop creative outlets, activities unrelated to work, and/or volunteer time.
- Take pride in your craft as a professional, as well as in your personal development.
- Acknowledge your limits & strive for flexibility.
- Put balance and nurturing into your ongoing schedule. Consider variants of mindfulness meditation, relaxation strategies, yoga, and self-soothing methods to achieve harmony.
- Value the importance of empathy and going beyond yourself, and appreciate that these concepts can co-exist with good self care.
- Accept appropriateness of boundary setting, as none of us can, nor should, be present for others at all times.

Mission of CARE

Increase awareness of how self-care and attention to wellness can mitigate the stressors inherent in the psychology professional.

Provide preventive resources that will support psychologists and students in maintaining and enhancing general health and mental well-being.

Provide education, support programming and resources that are relevant to the needs of the diverse California psychological community.

Develop mechanisms for dialogue and discussion on wellness issues with awareness to issues of diversity within the psychological community.

Endeavor to reduce the occurrence, frequency, and severity of distress and/or impairment of California psychologists and students.

Multiple Dimensions of CARE

Workshops and materials on self-care, resiliency, and other topics related to sustaining mental health and well-being.

Collaborative Communities of support through Chapter based programs.

Relevant articles on topics related to colleague wellness and support

Opportunities for participation in the CARE program in order to significantly contribute to the well being of the diverse California professional psychological community

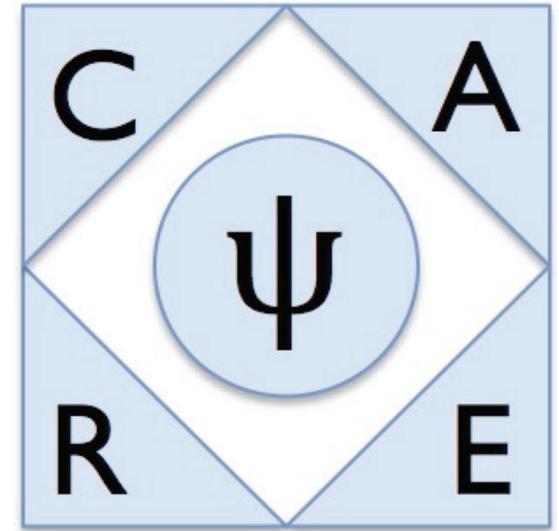
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Chair: Pearl Werfel, PhD
Gitu Bhatia, PsyD
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Denise Lew, PsyD
Theopia Jackson, PhD
Monica Ellis, MA

e-mail: care@cpapsych.org
website: care.cpapsych.org



The Voice of Psychology in California



Colleague Awareness Resources & Education (CARE)

Supporting the wellness and resilience of California's diverse professional psychology community