



Burnout or Compassion Fatigue

We sometimes assume that our very status as helpers grants us some sort of immunity from the hardship...as you care for people with your heart wide open, you often don't realize how much of what you are exposed to is being taken in and held in your own body. *Trauma Stewardship*, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Symptoms:

- I no longer participate in the activities I used to enjoy
- I feel blue, irritable, hopeless, and helpless more often than not
- I find myself getting upset more quickly than normal
- I am getting sick more often than normal
- I feel like I can't take it one more day
- I feel overwhelmed and fantasize about escape
- I want to hurt the person I am caring for, or to hurt myself
- I have a low frustration tolerance
- I feel futile, and at a loss for meaning and purpose
- I feel emotionally exhausted and spiritually bankrupt
- I feel depressed or more moody than usual
- I have less patience
- I am emotionally withdrawing and having fewer contacts with friends
- I am experiencing more difficulty sleeping
- I worry more than usual
- I am expressing a more negative attitude than usual
- I feel more apathetic, cynical or overwhelmed
- I want to distance myself from the team

Things That Might Help:

- Might I check to see if my expectations are realistic? Are shifts needed?
- Do I need to get better at saying no and at setting limits to protect myself, my time, my energy?
- Do I need to know more about the...situation?
- Can I ask for help? Do I need practice?
- Would I benefit from developing and using both my team and my personal safety net?
- Am I taking breaks...build my "days off" into the schedule?
- Is it time for me to learn a stress management technique?
- Would it be a good time for me to call a counselor or consultant...?

"Be the change you want to see in the world" - Gandhi