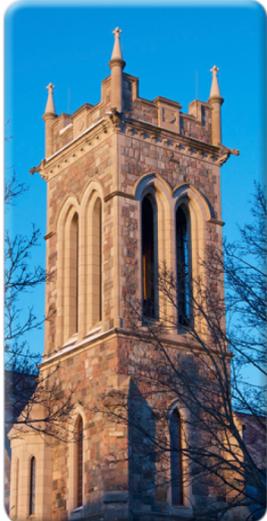




Conquering Compassion Fatigue



Host:

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Senior Health Education Specialist
Church Pension Group

Presenter:

Richard Conforto, Ph.D

Psychologist and Clinical Director
Springfield Psychological



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CPG Webinar Series



Today's Host



Krishna Dholakia, MS, RD, CDE, CDN
Senior Health Education Specialist
Church Pension Group

Krishna has been with the Church Pension Group since 2015 where she develops health programs and resources in order to promote, maintain, and improve member health. Krishna is a registered dietitian, diabetes educator, and 500-hr certified yoga teacher.

Today's Presenter



Richard Conforto, Ph.D. Psychologist and Clinical Director

A psychologist licensed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Richard Conforto, Ph.D., has more than 40 years of experience providing direct clinical services to children, adolescents, adults, and families. Dr. Conforto, who often conducts wellness and educational seminars for private and business audiences, holds a Doctoral degree in School Psychology from Temple University and a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science in Experimental Psychology from Villanova University.



CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Presented by
Richard Conforto, Ph.D

Together, all the way.®



SEMINAR GOALS



- Define compassion fatigue
- Identify signs of compassion fatigue and factors that contribute to its occurrence
- Discuss the added impact of trauma exposure
- Learn techniques to prevent and recover from compassion fatigue
- Explore ways to support yourself and others suffering from compassion fatigue
- Know the benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



THE COST OF CARING

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

- Rachel Naomi Remen
Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal

By the numbers:

- **87%** of emergency responders have reported symptoms of compassion fatigue
- **70%** of mental health professionals have experienced compassion fatigue
- **1 in 2** child welfare workers experience symptoms of compassion fatigue in the severe range

WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

Compassion: A feeling of sympathy for another who is stricken by suffering, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the pain or the cause.



Compassion fatigue: Fatigue, emotional distress, or apathy resulting from the constant demands of caring for others.

Burnout: A state of mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion due to excessive and prolonged stress.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- The “caring gene”
- Increasing demands
- Putting your own needs aside
- Unclear boundaries between empathy and sympathy



COMMON SIGNS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

Thoughts and feelings

- Reduced sense of purpose
- Overly high expectations of yourself
- Low self-esteem
- Pattern of cynicism
- In denial about problems
- Irritability, anxiety
- Inability to feel joy
- Feelings of isolation
- Depression, suicidal thoughts

Behaviors

- Sleep disturbances
- Complaints of physical aches/pains
- Increase in compulsive behaviors
- Difficulty with attention/concentration
- Excessive blaming of outside forces
- Chronic mental/physical fatigue
- Difficulty taking time off work



REACTIONS TO TRAUMA WORK



Ask yourself: am I...

- Having unwanted, intrusive thoughts?
- Less responsive emotionally?
- Getting restful sleep?
- Jumpy and easily startled?
- Constantly on edge or quick to anger?
- Arguing with family and friends?
- Having trouble concentrating or staying focused?
- Overusing alcohol, drugs or other escape coping?
- Having thoughts of suicide?

Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.



RESPONDING TO THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE

- Learn healthy separation techniques
- Focus on compassion satisfaction
- Give and get peer support
- Take R & R and use it to recharge
- Call in reinforcements for life demands



Strategies to build resilience may also be valuable for helping professionals exposed to secondary/vicarious trauma.



A BALANCING ACT: EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT



Emotional involvement will differ for different cases and situations.
The key is to not let the balance tip too far too often.

HEALTHY APPROACHES TO BALANCE

- Maintain professional demeanor and boundaries
- Don't take reactions personally
- Be aware that past experiences may have an effect
- Employ coping strategies that have worked for you before



CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE: BELIEF SYSTEMS

Self-defeating thought:

“Taking care of myself or putting my needs first is selfish.”

New thought:

“If I don’t take care of myself first, I can’t possibly take care of others.”

Self-defeating thought:

“I shouldn’t feel so stressed, I am trained to handle this. It’s my job.”

New thought:

“It’s ok to have a reaction, it doesn’t make me weak or incapable of doing a good job.”

The first step toward changing self-defeating beliefs is to monitor your self-talk. You have to *think* about what you are thinking.



CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE: TAKE CONTROL



- Develop realistic expectations
- Seek balance, balance, balance!
- Tap into your resiliency



CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE: SELF-CARE



- Take care of your physical health
- Use your sense of humor
- Avoid drugs and alcohol
- Stay connected to your creative self



CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE: RELAXATION TECHNIQUES



Breathing
exercises

Progressive
relaxation

Visual
imagery

CONQUERING COMPASSION FATIGUE: SEEK SUPPORT



- Rely on your coworkers
- Maintain non-work friendships
- Seek out the company of positive role models
- Get help when you need it



Turn to organized peer support within your workplace or profession and remember that the EAP is available 24/7.



What can we do
to help each other?



- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Work/life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
- Convenience services
- Financial services
- Legal services

BENEFITS OF THE EAP

Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.



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EAP Online Resources

■ **NEW website:** www.mycigna.com

■ **Under the “Members” section, click on “Login” to access your benefits**

- Enter your Employer ID: episcopal (lower case)
 - First-time visitors must register
- On left-hand side, click on desired topic
- Click on “Accept” for the privacy policy

■ **Contact Number:** 866-395-7794

The screenshot displays the Cigna My Health website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'My Plans' and 'My Health', along with user information for 'Hi Richard' and links for 'Profile', 'Support Center', 'Forms', 'Español', and 'Log Out'. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation, there are four main menu items: 'REVIEW MY COVERAGE', 'MANAGE CLAIMS & BALANCES', 'FIND PROVIDERS AND COSTS', and 'ESTIMATE HEALTH CARE COSTS'. The main content area is titled 'Employee Assistance Program (EAP)' and includes the following information:

- Coverage Period:** 01/01/2018 - 12/31/2018
- Description:** Your home and work lives impact your health. That's why Cigna's EAP provides access to licensed clinicians to help you cope with a wide variety of challenges, from family and job issues to substance use and emotional health.
- Cost:** No cost to you as part of your employer's program.
- Maximum visits with a licensed in-network counselor:** Each person may use up to 10 visit(s) per issue per plan year.

Below this information are five icons with corresponding text:

- Share EAP with someone in your household**
- Live chat with a Cigna EAP consultant (M-F, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. ET)**
- Schedule a phone call with a Cigna EAP consultant**
- Get an authorization to visit a licensed EAP counselor**
- Find a licensed EAP counselor near you**

At the bottom, there is a section titled 'About Cigna's EAP Services' which states: 'The Employee Assistance Program offers access to face-to-face counselors in the Cigna Behavioral Health network, as well as Cigna EAP phone consultants to help process life stresses and improve well-being. Cigna's EAP also offers you additional resources to help you balance your work and life needs. You can find them through your WorkLife Resources.'

On the right side of the page, there is a 'NEED HELP' sidebar with the following options:

- Visit the Support Center**
- For help finding something on the site please call 1-800-853-2713**
- For help with plan and coverage information please call 1-800-244-6224**

A 'VIEW MORE' link is located at the bottom of the sidebar.



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Stay connected to your benefits with **MyCPG Accounts** on [cpg.org](https://www.cpg.org) – quick, convenient, safe.

Thank You.

For your participation and feedback!