Poster presentations

Maintaining compassion and preventing compassion fatigue

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OBJECTIVES

Compassion may be defined as a deep awareness of the suffering of another human or animal, coupled with the wish to relieve it. To enable vets to continue to provide compassionate they need to look after themselves and those in their team.

Using the analogy of the charge in a mobile phone battery, on some days you do not use it much and your battery strength is good, whereas on other days, there is a bigger drain on reserves, and your battery needs recharging. If there is no chance to recharge, over time, compassion fatigue and burnout may occur. We aim to help you recognise signs of compassion fatigue, and look at 'drainers' and 'chargers' from both an individual and a team perspective.

METHODS

A review of the literature coupled with examples from our experience as paediatricians.

RESULTS

Individual drainers

- Complaints
- Discrimination

- Colleague sickness
- Long hours
- Intra-operative death
- Busy on-call

Individual chargers

- CPD
- Reflection
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Supervision
- Exercise, cinema, reading, music

Team drainers

- Recruitment problems
- Bullying
- Unrealistic targets
- Financial difficulties
- Practice take-over
- Poorly functioning team

Team chargers

- Debriefing after stressful events
- Regular breaks
- Peer support
- Teaching sessions
- 'Away-days'

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

We need to think about how we recharge through the day to ensure compassionate, high quality care from the beginning of our shift to the end. We need to become more aware of our own reserves, identifying individual and team 'drainers' thereby allowing us to implement 're-charging' strategies to try to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout.

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IP: 54.198.64.247

On: Wed, 26 Apr 2023 00:15:27