



HANDLE W/CARE

EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

RESOURCES FOR COMPASSION FATIGUE & CARE

What is grief?

Grief arises when we have unmet expectations. Due to the upheaval of COVID-19 and recent race-related tragedies, you are dealing with the unmet expectations of clients/coworkers as well as your own.

What is compassion fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is the emotional residue of exposure to those experiencing trauma/grief

Some symptoms of compassion fatigue

- Apathy/lack of interest in others
- Disrupted sleep
- Avoidance or a sense dread
- Irritability
- Inability to turn your mind off

Actions to help with compassion fatigue:

- Make space for your own feelings; you will care for others the way you care for yourself
- Take breaks throughout your day to stretch, breathe, or go for a walk
- Have a ritual or activity that signals you are “done for the day”. This is especially important as we are all working from home
- What are acts of self-nurture that you can engage in? (holistic eating and movement, journaling, something fun/life giving)
- Talk about what you are feeling to a friend, partner, or supervisor (you are not alone)
- Pay attention to your mind and your body before you engage with social media.
 - How am I feeling? What need am I meeting in this scrolling?

Tips for Communicating Care to Others

- Acknowledge the hardness
- Ask leading questions/be comfortable with silence (“Tell me more”)
- Repeat what you hear (“that sounds...”)
- Admit that you don’t know what to say
- Anything with “at least” is (almost always) bad
- Avoid clichés
- Be careful with religious language



HANDLE W/CARE

EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

- **Silent Sam**
 - Profoundly uncomfortable with emotional disruption
 - Leaves people feeling unseen/unheard
 - Do you consistently change the subject?
 - Do you physically walk away from uncomfortable situations?
 - Were you emotionally abandoned?
 - Leaves people feeling profoundly unseen
 - Do something! It does not have to be perfect; your kindness is your credential
- **Commiserating Candace**
 - Rushing in with your own story of pain hijacks the narrative
 - Choose to actively listen and let the other person be the focus of attention
- **Cheer-Up Cheryl**
 - By always looking for the bright side, Cheer-Up Cheryl short-circuits connection
 - Others are forced to either put on a happy face or to stop sharing their pain
 - You don't have to make grief OK. Some things cannot be fixed, only carried
- **Fix-It Frank**
 - Feels a deep need to "make things better" in his/her response
 - Some things cannot be fixed, they can only be carried.
- **Buck-Up Bobby**
 - Usually a product of cultures that prioritize "pushing-through"
 - This can especially be a problem in cultures that prize productivity
 - You will help people best by allowing them the space to be sad/angry/overwhelmed

Mental Health Resources

- [Emotional Intelligence Quiz](#), a great resource from the UC Berkeley Compassion Lab
- [How to Support Others During a Pandemic](#) Option B, contains a range of specific content
- [Handle with Care: Empathy at Work Podcast](#) this is my podcast 😊. It contains practical tips and stories about helping people through a range of disruptive life events

My Contact Information

I would love to hear from you; I deeply believe in the importance of this work and would love to help any way I can.

- Email: liesel@lieselmertes.com
- Website: lieselmertes.com
- Cell: 317-694-9139
- Podcast: [Handle with Care: Empathy at Work](#)