Empathy Fatigue: Healing the Mind, Body, and Spirit of Professional Counselors

How to keep counselors from being overwhelmed by the trauma that they are supposed to treat is becoming a core topic of professional training. Dr. Stebnicki's book draws on five years of original research to provide a repertory of self-care strategies designed to increase personal resiliency and decrease counselor burnout and fatigue.

Many mental health practitioners present symptoms that are consistent with their clients' anxiety and stress-related disorders. It comes as no surprise, then, that "counselor impairment" - the stress that comes from treating survivors of traumatic events - is now officially recognized by the American Counseling Associations' Task Force on Counselor Wellness.

"Empathy Fatigue" is a term coined by the author after his own experience serving on the crisis response team for the Westside Middle School shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Remarkably, symptoms of empathy fatigue are evident amongst a broad range of professionals: those who treat victims of stressful and traumatic events; those who treat persons with abuse, mood, anxiety, and stress-related disorders; as well as those who work in career and vocational settings or with people with mental and physical disabilities. This guide is also meant for all these groups.

This book provides a repertoire of strategies, techniques, and insight designed to increase personal resiliency and decrease counselor burnout and fatigue:

- Self-assessment approaches, with an in-depth analysis of empathy fatigue and an explanation of this phenomenon from a mind, body, and spiritual perspective.
- Detailed case studies and suggested questions for self-assessments and self-care.
- A variety of self-care approaches, providing guidelines to counselors and clinicians to identify their own emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion.

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