

Compassion Fatigue

Section 3

ZEALOT – We are committed, involved, and available... Ready to problem solve... Ready to make a difference... We willingly give it all we have... We are willing to go the extra mile and often do so without prompting.... "I'll do that!!"

IRRITABILITY – We begin to see the imperfect nature of the systems and people around us... We distance ourselves from family and friends... Begin to belittle our children, partners and friends... We talk unfairly about their challenges and put down their efforts... The use of humor is sometimes strained... We daydream or become distracted when our children are speaking with us... Oversights and mistakes begin to occur. We may notice our anger, cynicism, diminished creativity, and sadness.

Withdrawal — We are unable to embrace the complexity of the problems and our enthusiasm turns sour... We begin to see our children as irritants... Complaints may be made about our efforts and we might have problems in our work life... We are tired all the time... We no longer wish to talk to our children... We neglect our family, friends and ourselves... Our shield gets thicker and thicker to block our pain and sadness. We may experience difficulty empathizing and feel numb to other's pain.

Compassion Fatigue's Path

(Cycle is from work of Eric Gentry, PhD, 2012)

Renewal vs. Pathology

BURN OUT

COMPASSION RESILIENCE

Unwell vs. Renewal — If we have not addressed this cycle earlier, we come to a fork in the road where we either continue deeper into compassion fatigue to a place of illness, fatigue and state of overwhelm or we take a turn towards renewal, a place of resiliency, hardiness and transformation.

Zombie — Our hopelessness turns to rage... We begin to hate any and all people... We get angry at our family and friends if they dare question us... Others become incompetent or ignorant in our eyes... We parent in a silo, without support from others... We have no patience and lose our sense of humor... We may have a sense that we can't ever do enough, an inflated sense of importance related to our role as a parent, hyper-vigilance/ sleeplessness, and a sense of persecution.

