



Burnout Prevention: Caring for Others versus Self-Preservation

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Compassion Fatigue vs. Burnout



- Cost of empathy
- Specific reaction to working with trauma history of survivors
- Occurs only with specialized work
- Onset often sudden
- May lead to changes in trust, feelings of control, intimacy issues, safety concerns, intrusive imagery
- Generalized stress of working with difficult clients & situations
- Occurs in any profession
- Feeling overloaded
- Progresses gradually
- Emotional exhaustion
- Does not necessarily lead to changes associated with personal life

Commonalities

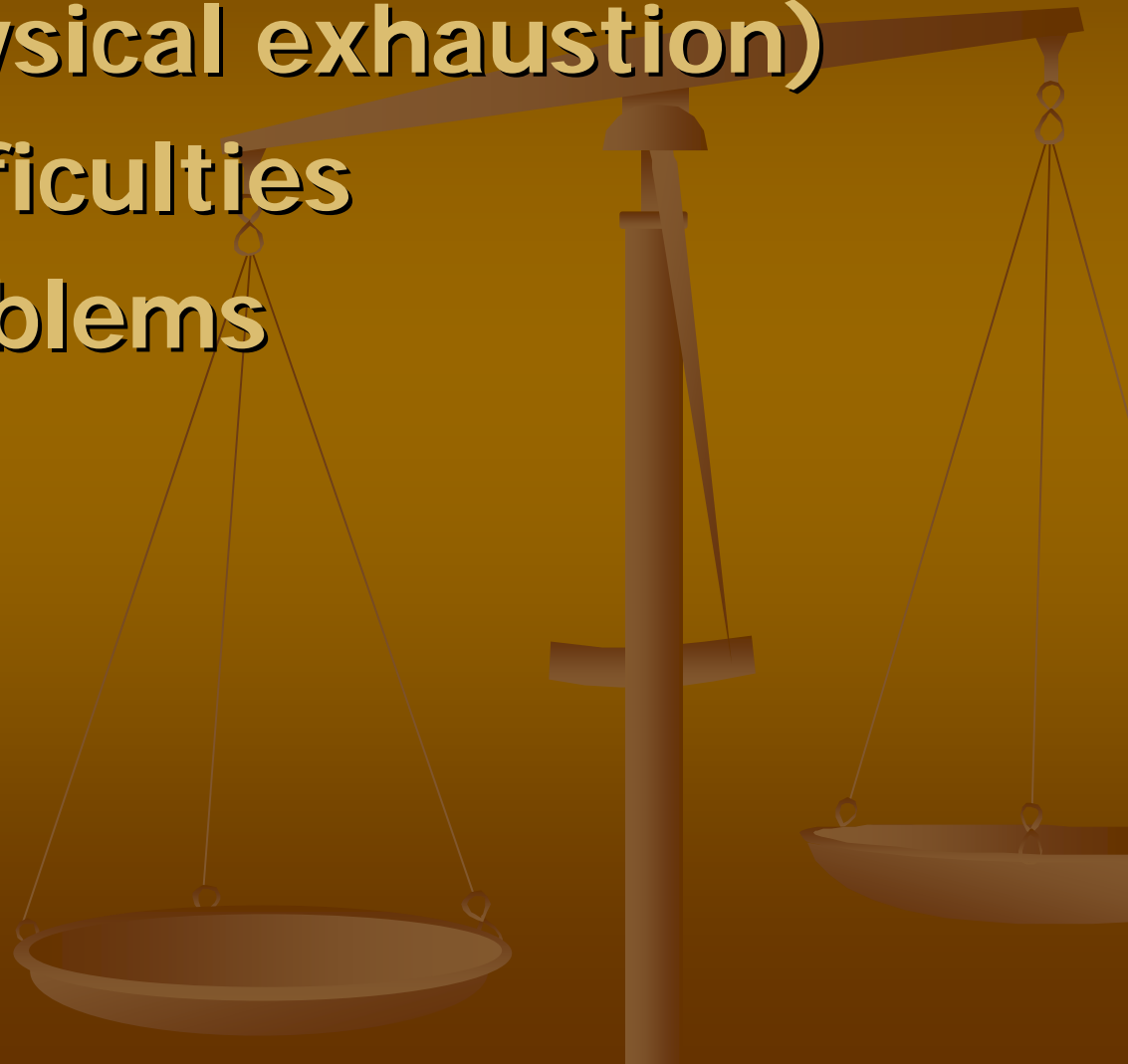
- Physical symptoms
- Behavioral symptoms
- Work-related issues
- Interpersonal problems
- Decrease in concern & esteem for clients
- Decline in quality of care



SYMPTOM CATEGORIES:

Physical Symptoms

- Fatigue (physical exhaustion)
- Sleeping difficulties
- Somatic problems



SYMPTOM CATEGORIES:

Emotional Symptoms

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Guilt
- Sense of helplessness



SYMPTOM CATEGORIES:

Behavioral Symptoms

- Aggression
- Callousness
- Pessimism
- Defensiveness



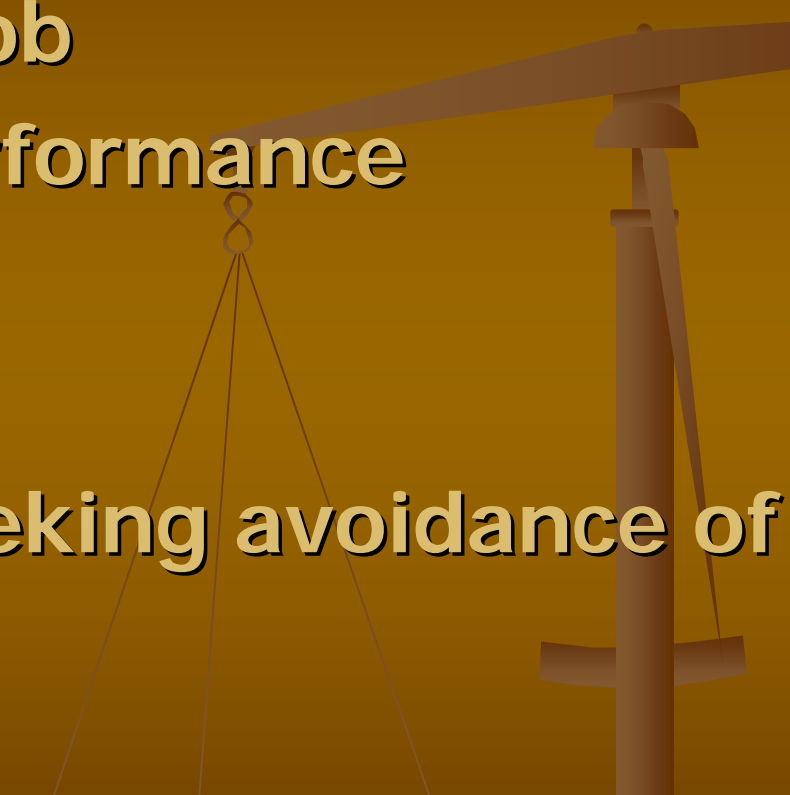
SYMPTOM CATEGORIES:

Behavioral Symptoms

- **Cynicism**
- **Avoidance of clients**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Physically or Verbally
Acting-out**



SYMPTOM CATEGORIES: Work-Related Symptoms

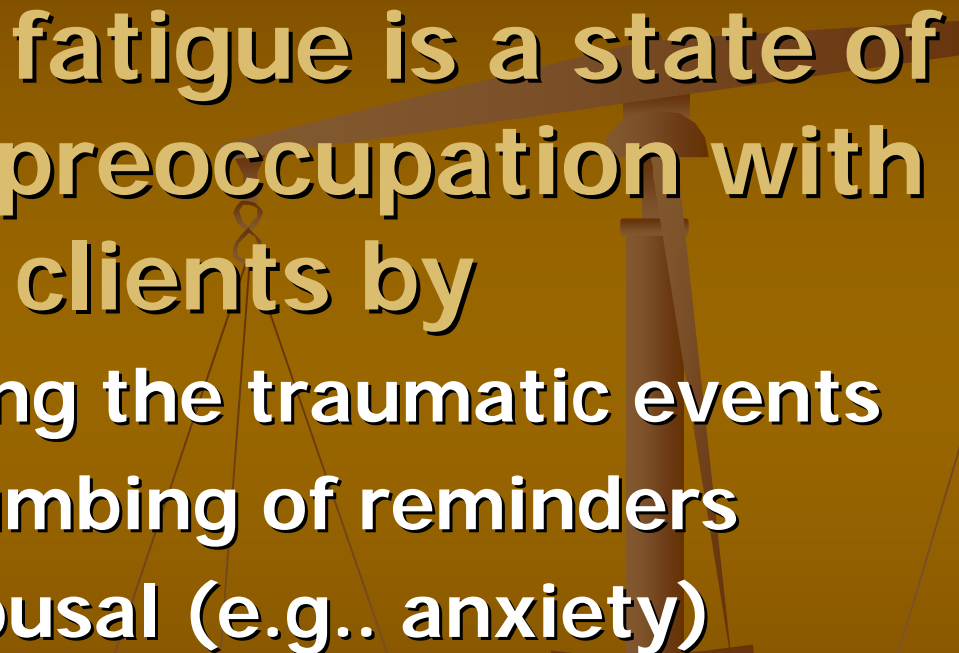
- **Quitting the job**
 - **Poor work performance**
 - **Absenteeism**
 - **Tardiness**
 - **Constantly seeking avoidance of work**
 - **Risk-taking**
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SYMPTOM CATEGORIES: Interpersonal Symptoms

- **Perfunctory communication**
- **Inability to concentrate**
- **Social withdrawal**
- **Lack of a sense of humor**
- **Poor client interactions**

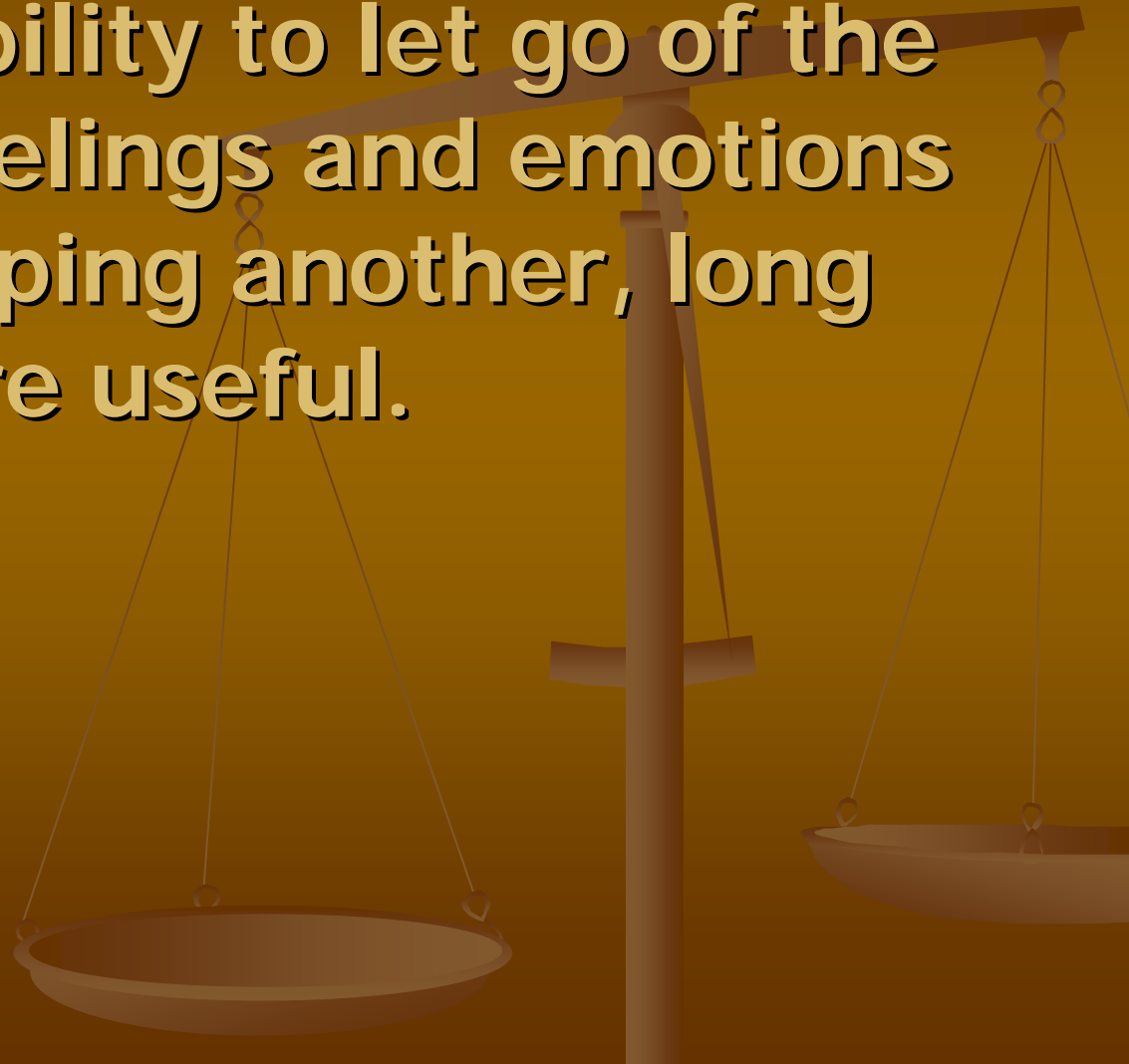


Definition of Compassion Fatigue

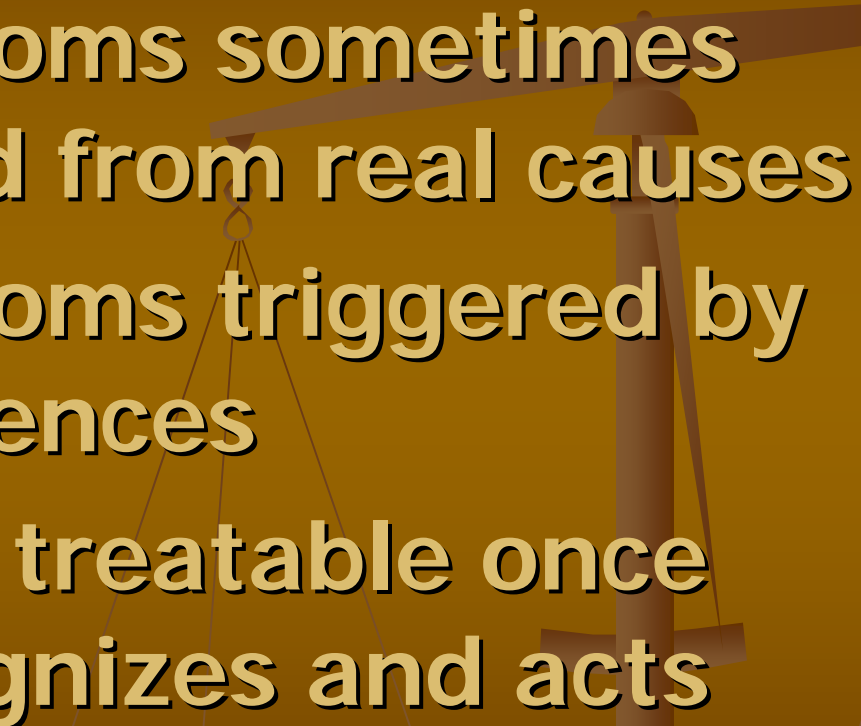
- Compassion fatigue is a state of tension and preoccupation with traumatized clients by
 - re-experiencing the traumatic events
 - avoidance/numbing of reminders
 - persistent arousal (e.g.. anxiety)
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THE COMPASSION TRAP

- It is the inability to let go of the thoughts, feelings and emotions useful in helping another, long after they are useful.



Compassion Fatigue is Characterized by a

- set of symptoms sometimes disconnected from real causes
 - set of symptoms triggered by other experiences
 - being highly treatable once worker recognizes and acts
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Burnout



DEFINITION: A state of extreme dissatisfaction with one's work.

Work-Climate View (Christine Maslach):

“Burnout is not a problem of the people themselves but of the social environment in which people work.”

(Maslach & Leiter, 1997)

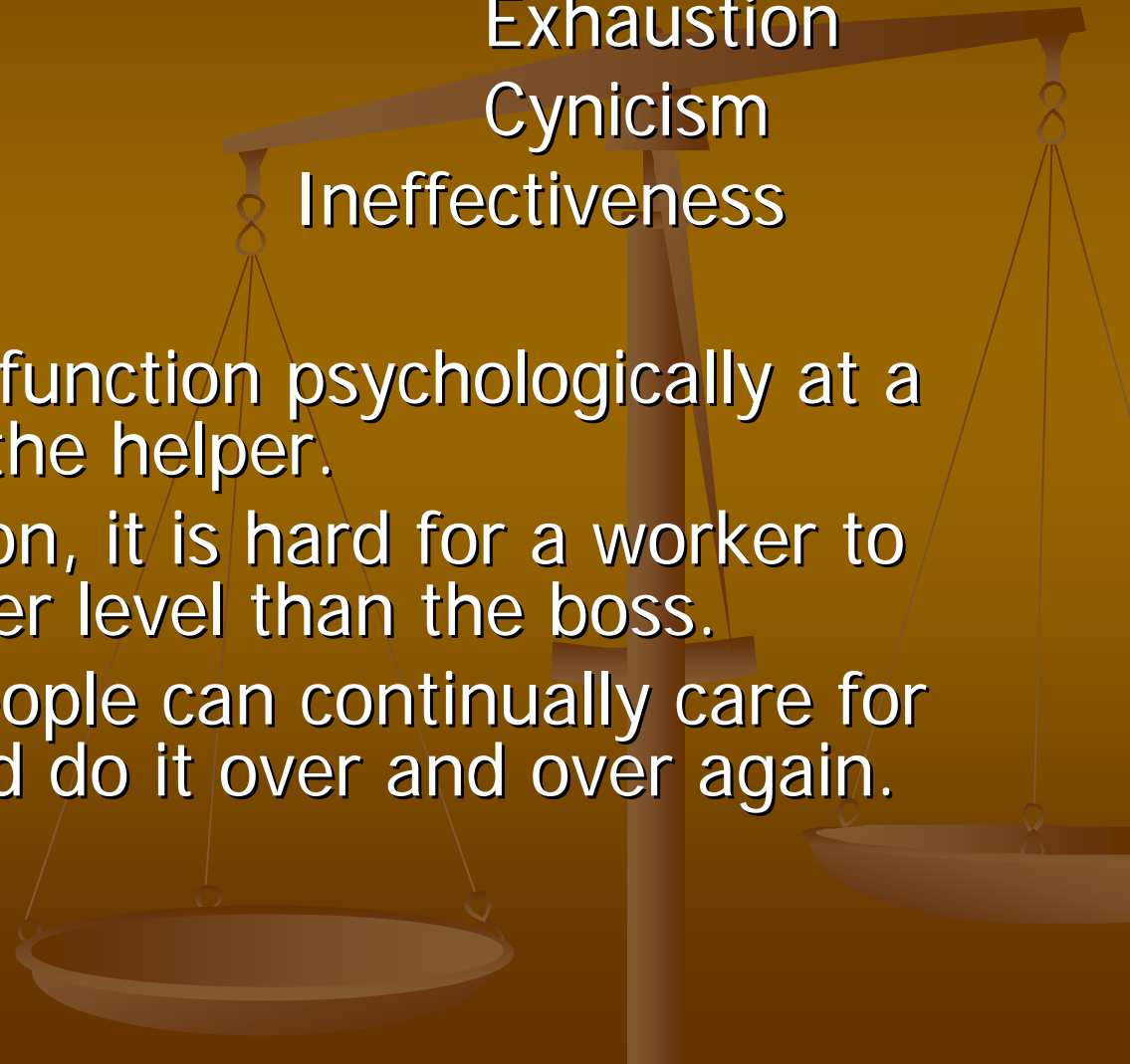
Key Work Dimensions

Fully Engaged
Energy
Involvement
Efficacy

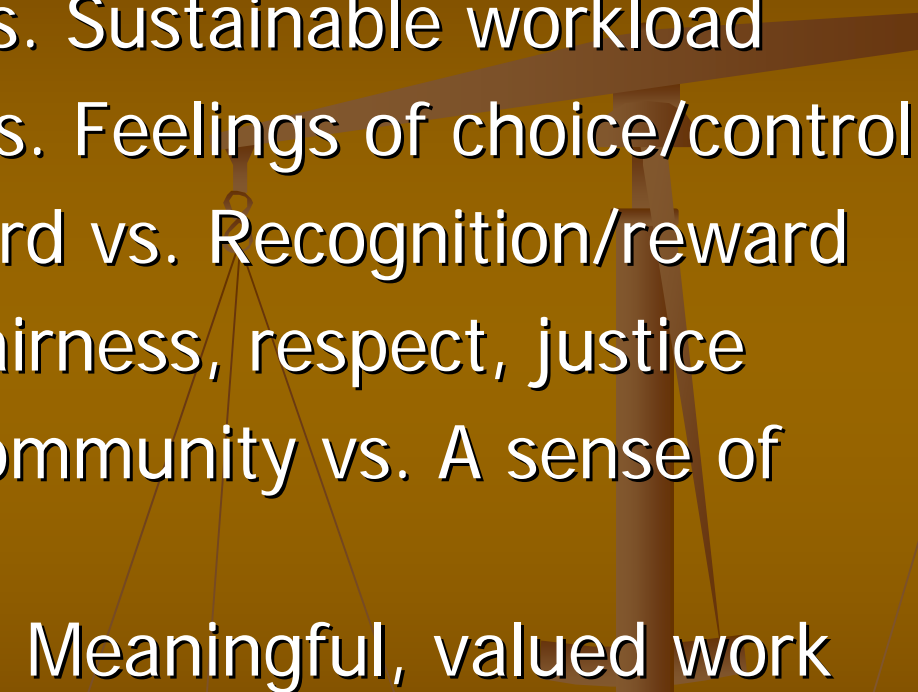
versus

Burned Out
Exhaustion
Cynicism
Ineffectiveness

- The client cannot function psychologically at a higher level than the helper.
- In a parallel fashion, it is hard for a worker to function at a higher level than the boss.
- Only energized people can continually care for others in need and do it over and over again.



Six Work Environment Sources of Burnout

1. Work overload vs. Sustainable workload
 2. Lack of control vs. Feelings of choice/control
 3. Insufficient reward vs. Recognition/reward
 4. Unfairness vs. Fairness, respect, justice
 5. Breakdown of Community vs. A sense of community
 6. Value conflict vs. Meaningful, valued work
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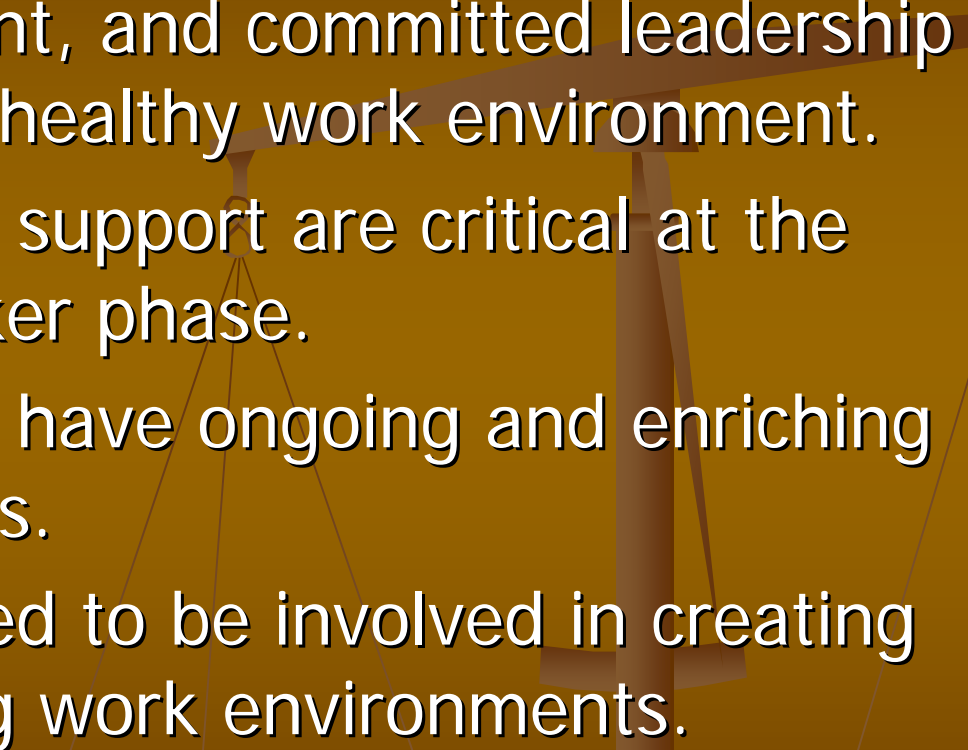
Negative Work Culture



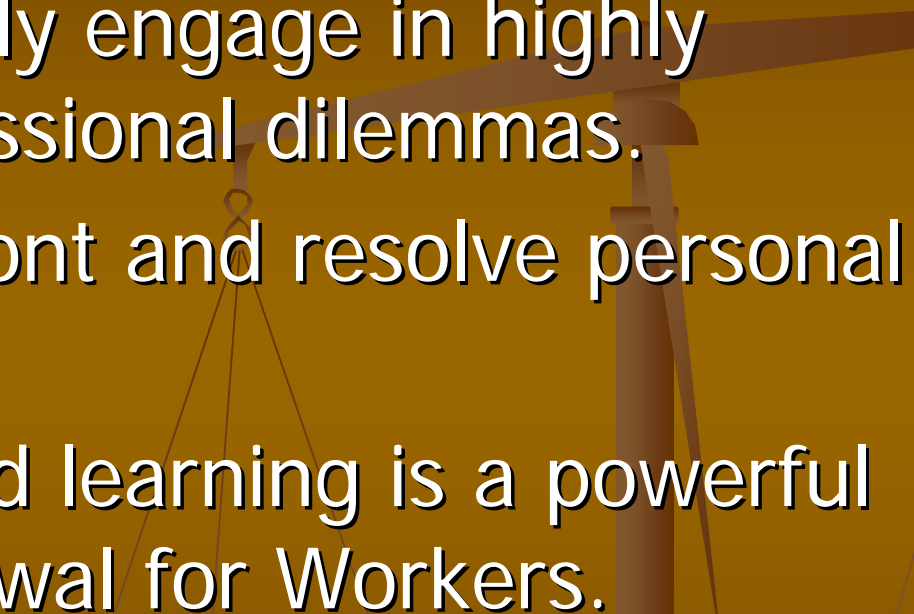
- Negativity is easy to catch.
- Negativity is seductive—at first when one gets it; he/she feels better. Venting helps initially, but does not lead to solutions; instead leads to more venting.
- Difficult to offer hope to clients within a critical, cynical work environment.

Solution: May include using an external consultant to turn work environment into a burnout prevention culture rather than a burnout creation one.

Creating a Positive Work Structure Within the Organization

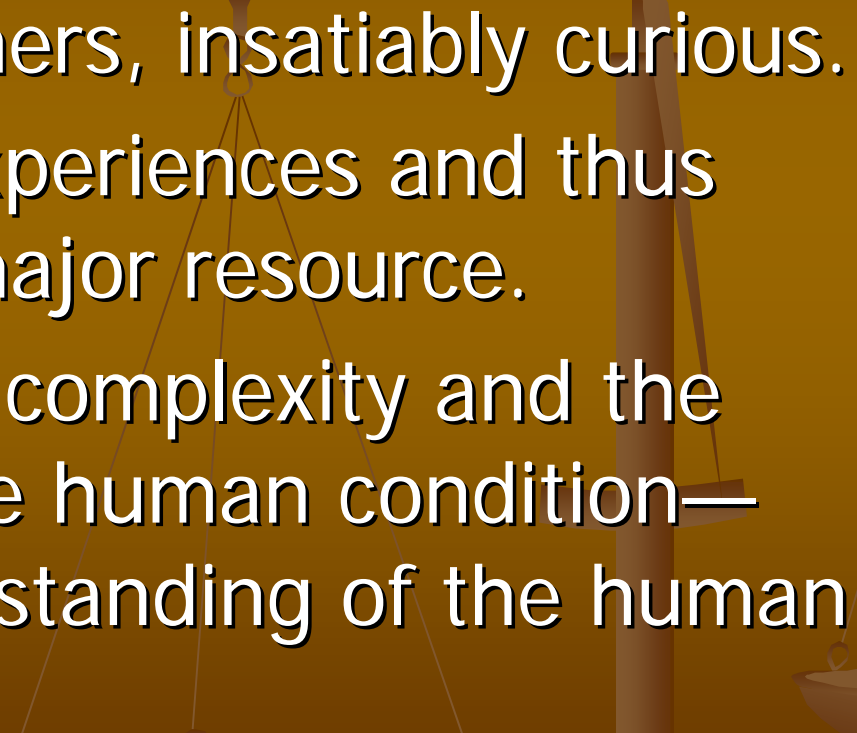
1. Caring, competent, and committed leadership that promotes a healthy work environment.
 2. Mentor and peer support are critical at the novice/new worker phase.
 3. Workers need to have ongoing and enriching peer relationships.
 4. Workers also need to be involved in creating health-promoting work environments.
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Protective Factors for Workers

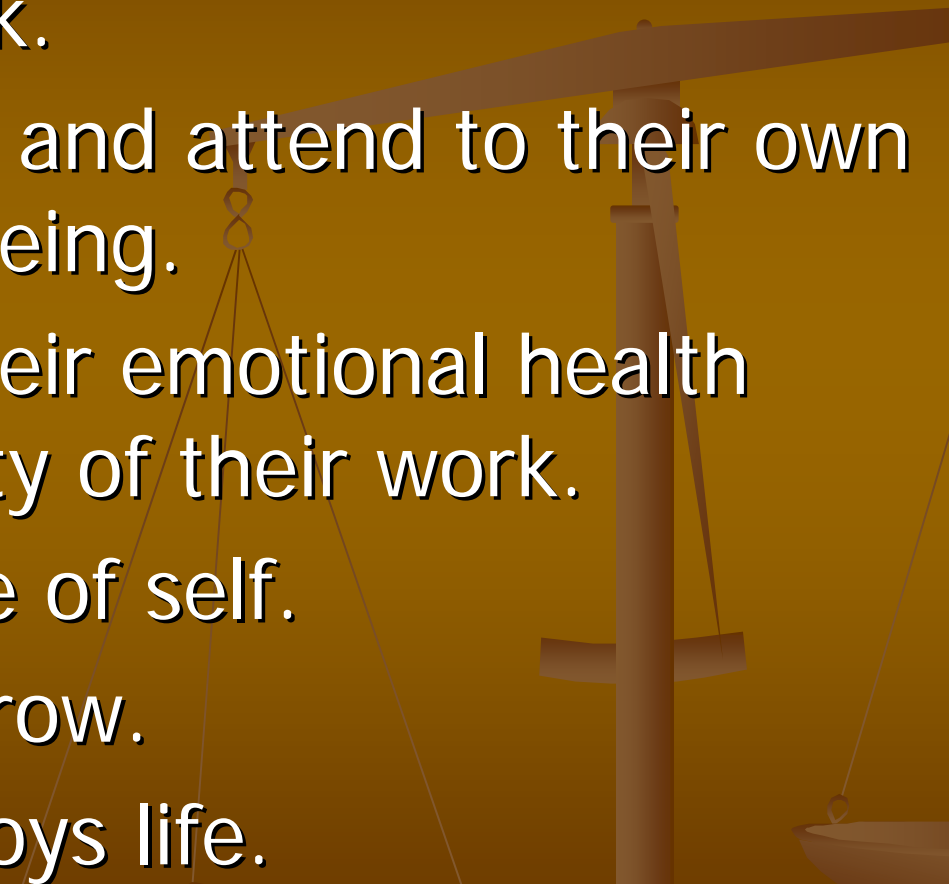
1. Workers directly engage in highly stressful professional dilemmas.
 2. Workers confront and resolve personal issues.
 3. Highly engaged learning is a powerful source of renewal for Workers.
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Characteristics of Master or Well-Regarded Practitioners that Avoid Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

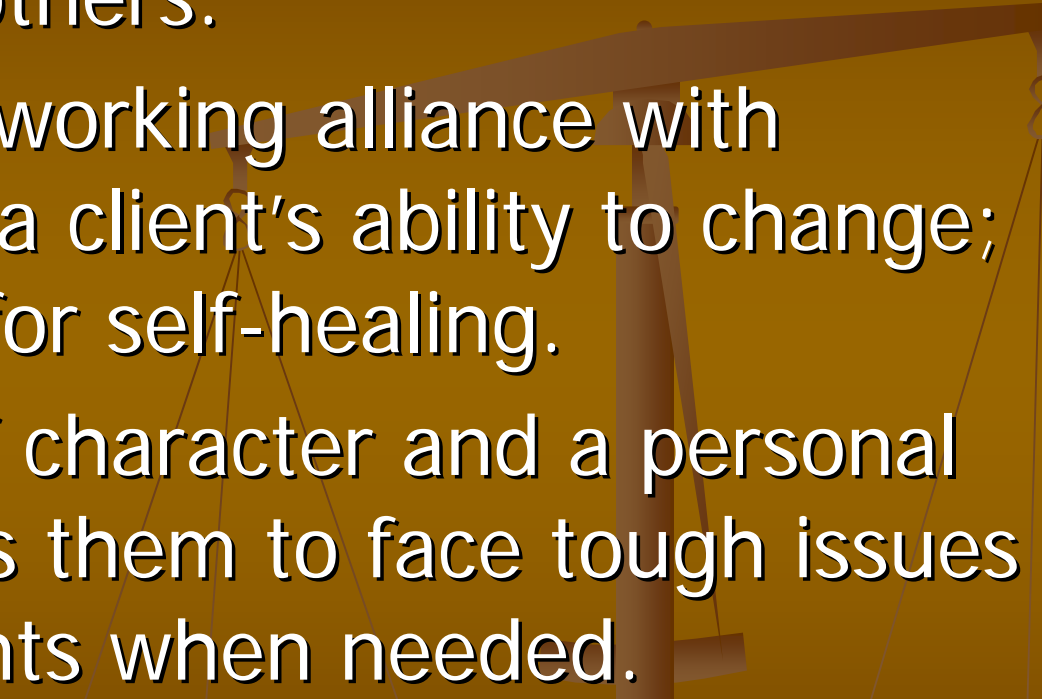
Cognitive Domain:

- Voracious Learners, insatiably curious.
 - Accumulated experiences and thus wisdom are a major resource.
 - Value cognitive complexity and the ambiguity of the human condition—profound understanding of the human condition.
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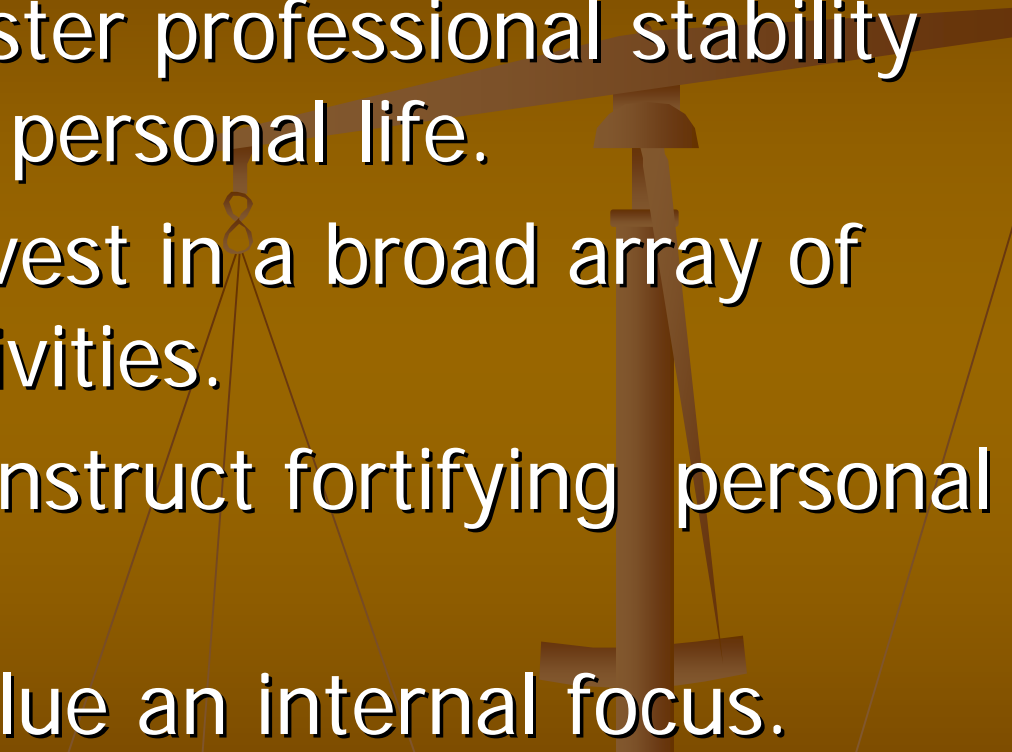
Emotional Domain:

- Emotional Receptivity defined as being self-aware, reflective, non-defensive, and open to feedback.
 - Mentally healthy and attend to their own emotional well-being.
 - Aware of how their emotional health affects the quality of their work.
 - Deep acceptance of self.
 - Intense will to grow.
 - Passionately enjoys life.
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Relational Domain

- Possess strong relationship skills—able to intensely engage others.
 - Establish a strong working alliance with clients—believe in a client's ability to change; the client's ability for self-healing.
 - Have a strength of character and a personal power that enables them to face tough issues and challenge clients when needed.
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Nurturing self through solitude and relationships

1. Participants foster professional stability by nurturing a personal life.
 2. Participants invest in a broad array of restorative activities.
 3. Participants construct fortifying personal relationships.
 4. Participants value an internal focus.
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References

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- Skovholt, T. (2001). *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for Counselors, Therapists, Teachers, and Health Professionals*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Skovholt, T., & Jennings, L. (2004). *Master Therapists: Exploring Expertise in Therapy and Counseling*. Boston: Pearson.
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