

The Development of an Intervention to Coach Carers in Resilience to Compassion Fatigue and Burnout using Psychophonetics Methodology for Self-Care and Empathy Skills (2011)

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Carers who work with clients who are traumatized and stressed may be susceptible to compassion fatigue and burnout. The sustained need to remain empathic to those in one's care has been cited as a significant factor contributing to compassion fatigue and burnout. Empathy is a psychological construct that refers to an intersubjective induction process whereby positive and negative emotions are shared between people in a caring interaction. The aim of the research is to assess the needs of carers for skills in developing resilience to compassion fatigue and burnout, and to develop and test the efficacy of an intervention incorporating Psychophonetics methodology for self care and empathy skills.

The intervention is applied, as a pilot study, to a population of home based carers working with HIV+ patients in an area of South Africa facing socioeconomic challenge, and to final year pharmacy students at the University of Western Cape. The population of home based carers showed a statistically significant improvement in scores for the risk of secondary traumatic stress, a component of compassion fatigue, measured with the ProQOL v5 instrument. The refined intervention is applied to a population of future pharmacists to test the validity of pre-emptive skills development before they enter the work place. Furthermore, the research aims to apply the methodology within a framework of learning for professional development, by accessing a mode of attention that is open to the social field and its request for change.

The results of the research confirmed a dire need amongst the two populations studied for skills in dealing with the effects of interpersonal dynamics in a caring context. I decided to pursue the research further as a PhD at University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business within the department of Human Resources.