COMPASSION FATIGUE
AND THE HOLIDAYS

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Minimizing risk factors can help prevent or dramatically decrease compassion fatigue. Identifying risk factors can be a major step. Risk factors for compassion fatigue can include the following:

- Working with large numbers of terminally ill, chronically ill or critically ill patients
- Working with large numbers of traumatized or victimized people
- Personal trauma
- Lack of training
- Insufficient or lack of external support system(s)
- Lack of outside interests

Prevention... an ounce of prevention equals a pound of cure. Knowing how to prevent the syndrome is critical. Some of the preventive measures to reduce compassionate fatigue include:

- Pace activities and tasks
- Meditate
- Journal
- Personal hobbies
- Spend time with friends
- Take frequent breaks
- Increase personal knowledge about care-giving or disease processes
- Get at least eight hours of sleep each night
- Well-balanced diet (avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol)
- Pat yourself on the back
- Humor! As they say "laughter is the best medicine"
- Ask for help!
- Don’t be afraid to say "NO"
- Prioritize
- Enjoy the holiday season

If symptoms persist, contact your personal physician. There are many medications on the market that can minimize the symptoms of compassion fatigue.

Remember, the holiday season can be stressful, and caring for a chronically or terminally ill individual compounds this stress. Identifying compassion fatigue symptoms, risk factors and ways to minimize this syndrome can help you enjoy the holidays without feeling overwhelmed.

If you have questions regarding compassion fatigue or have questions about a terminally ill individual, contact Crossroads Hospice. A team of highly qualified, incredibly compassionate individuals are only a phone call away. **1-888-603-MORE** (6673)

References:

1.-Wright . (2004) Compassion Fatigue; How to avoid it”. PALLIATIVE MEDICINE
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