Helping the Helpers: Mindful Self-Care, Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Compassion Satisfaction Among Utah Mental Health Professionals
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INTRODUCTION
- Compassion fatigue can impact an individual’s quality of work and personal life
  - It is associated with less effective delivery of care and higher secondary traumatic stress
  - Its prevalence indicates that its reduction could benefit the lives of many in caring professions
- 40-60% of care professionals experience burnout during their career, with mental health professionals demonstrating higher levels of burnout than primary healthcare workers
- Compassion satisfaction is connected to higher well-being and lower levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress
- Practitioners in rural areas may be at more risk for compassion fatigue and burnout than their urban counterparts, especially in the State of Utah
- Effective self-care may lower compassion fatigue and burnout
- Mindful self-care can act as a protective agent against burnout, mental health symptoms, and low productivity

METHODS
- A list of licensed mental health professionals was provided by the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing
- Recruitment emails were sent to members on the list from the following Utah counties: Iron, Beaver, Morgan, Davis, Box Elder, Salt Lake, and Utah
- N = 138 (F 62, M 70; mean age = 46.71 years; 8.8% psychologists, 54.7% clinical social workers, 19.7% clinical mental health counselors, 16.8% marriage and family therapists)
- Mean number of years in practice = 15.10 (SD = 9.67)
- 111-item survey including the Mindful Self-Care Scale (MSCS) and Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Test (CFS)

RESULTS
- ↑Age = ↓Burnout, ↑Compassion Satisfaction, and ↑MSCS
- ↑Years in Practice = ↓Compassion Fatigue, ↓Burnout, ↑Compassion Satisfaction, ↑Supportive Structure
- ↑MSCS = ↑Compassion Satisfaction, ↓Compassion Fatigue, ↓Burnout
- ↑All MSCS subscales = ↓Burnout, ↑Compassion Satisfaction

DISCUSSION
- Genuine connection with others, compassion for oneself, a sense of purpose, and personal structure can greatly contribute to the decrease of compassion fatigue and burnout and increase of satisfaction with one’s work
- Licensed psychologists’ lower levels of compassion fatigue may be attributed to their additional years of doctoral graduate-level education
- Although many mental health professionals regularly experience compassion fatigue and burnout, they still find satisfaction and enjoyment in the work that they do
- An increase in mindful self-care practices may “help the helpers” (and subsequently their clients)

LIMITATIONS
- Mental health professionals interested in self-care and mindfulness may have been more likely to participate
- Possible social desirability biases
- Results are not generalizable

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