

COMPASSION FATIGUE AMONG PRACTICING COUNSELLORS IN ELDORET
MUNICIPALITY

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A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY OF
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY



MKU17/13
BF637 .A45 2013

OCTOBER 2013 -

ABSTRACT

The manifestation of the effects of post traumatic stress disorder in traumatized individuals has been well documented. The management of the consequences of helping these primary victims of trauma is of key importance to counselling practitioners' psychological, physical and emotional well-being. These ancillary effects, afflicting those not directly traumatized are often defined as secondary trauma or compassion fatigue. This research aimed at establishing the prevalence of compassion fatigue among practicing counsellors in Eldoret Municipality. The specific objectives were to establish the levels of compassion fatigue among practicing counsellors in Eldoret, to determine the relationship between the levels of compassion fatigue and counsellor performance at the workplace and the available strategies for the management of this phenomenon. The study was guided by psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. It provides insights to the concept that people are often unaware of the factors that determine their emotions and behaviour. The study therefore, explores how these unconscious factors affect current relationships and patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour. The target population consisted of 80 counsellors in Eldoret Municipality and a simple random sampling procedure to select a sample size of 67 counsellors was used for the study. The study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. The survey's validity and reliability was established through pre-test of the questionnaires during the pilot study. Data was collected through use of hybrid questionnaires and analysis of data involved descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies which were used in presentation of data by use of Tables and pie-charts. The findings of the study indicated that most practicing counsellors (52%) in Eldoret municipality had average compassion fatigue. The study found that respondents who had experienced a traumatic event in their lives, 12 (31%) had their duties affected by this traumatic event, while 27 (69%) did not have their job performance affected. It showed that the counsellors with average compassion fatigue have almost 4 times increased risk of having their performance affected compared to those with low compassion fatigue. The study recommended that counsellors and their employers must be adequately trained to recognise compassion fatigue. Counsellors must accept and embrace their vulnerability, as this may help them to adequately address the challenges they face when dealing with traumatized clients and seek support. They should be actively engaged in self-care practices that ensure their overall well-being.