

# Enhancing Vital Practice in a School of Nursing

University  
of Portland 

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# Background

- Jan 2020 - University of Portland School of Nursing (UPSON) established the Initiative for Vital Practice (I4VP) in response to perceived stress (PS) and compassion fatigue (CF)
- Multi-phase mixed-method research study
- Compassion Fatigue – multiple risk factors for burnout
- Vital practitioner
- Vital Organization

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

“A state of exhaustion and dysfunction, biologically, physiologically, and emotionally, as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress” (Figley, 1995) that is coupled with and compounded by burnout.

Figley, C. R. (1995). Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in the traumatized (Ed.).

Brunner/Mazel.

Braband, B., Pressman, C., & Vermeesch, A. (in press). Piloting the Perfect Storm: A Vision for the Vital Practitioner. *Journal*

*of Nursing Education.*

# COMPASSION FATIGUE RISK FACTORS

- Physical symptoms (back pain, migraines, aches, depression, and/or high BP (41%)
- Feeling like they can never get away from work (41%)
- Feeling when they have time off you have to “hurry up and relax” (32%)
- Feeling like you could never work hard enough (29%)

# Vital Practitioner

“A caregiver professional who engages in systematic self-care activities designed to increase subjective vitality, thereby mitigating compassion fatigue and burnout.”

Braband, B., Pressman, C., & Vermeesch, A. (in press). Piloting the Perfect Storm: A Vision for the Vital Practitioner. *Journal of Nursing Education*.

# VITAL ORGANIZATION

“Organizations with structures and cultural practices that align with evidence-based best-practices around subjective vitality, motivation, and self-regulation.”

Bober, T. & Regehr, C. (2006). Strategies for reducing secondary or vicarious trauma: Do they work? *Brief Treatment and Crisis*

*Intervention*, 6(1), 1-9.

# Goals and objectives

This PTO proposal will couple professional development with a research project and aims to:

- 1) Provide professional development for Dr. Amber Vermeesch, project PI and UPSON's employee wellness expert;
- 2) Identify and investigate incidences of CF, perceived stress, professional quality of life and resiliency among UPSON workers related to inclusion, diversity, workloads, impacts on professional quality of life and psychosocial exposures; and
- 3) Determine feasibility of a wellness intervention for UPSON workers.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Completion:
- University of Arizona's Integrative Health and Lifestyle Program
- Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Forest Therapy Guide Certification



# STUDY PURPOSE

To develop, test, and propagate caregiver self-management practices meant to mitigate compassion fatigue by increasing subjective vitality among faculty, staff and students.

# METHODS

- Initiative for Vital Practice (I4VP) established
- **Phase I:** Mixed-methods survey design (N = 34 faculty & staff)
- Data collection tools:
  - Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) (Stamm, 2010)
  - Multidimensional Work Motivation (Gagne et al., 2015)
- **Phase II** - Intervention, Consultation, Implementation

# QUALITATIVE RESULTS

## **Individual primary stress alleviators:**

1. “No work” times (boundaries)
2. Limiting numbers of new class preps

## **Institutional-level stress alleviators:**

1. Needing to provide time together for work and leisure
2. Identify “no work” times including academic breaks
3. Reduce workloads and duplicative work

# QUALITATIVE RESULTS

## SWOT Analysis

### Individual impact:

- The connections and personal relationships with other staff members that they partner with in teaching is what helps keep them sane and able to do their job to the best of their ability during times like the pandemic.
- Difficult to hit the same targets or quotas with the new stressful environment of being in a pandemic.
- They stated how self-care is hard work, and at the end of the day they are too tired to do the hard work of taking care of themselves

### Institutional impact:

- Faculty/Staff believe that after all of this we will emerge as a much stronger team and university having gone through it, which they think is driven by the sense of optimism from the leadership team.
- It is acknowledged that self-care is something valued by the School of Nursing, although it is difficult with schedules to always implement that, but overall feel that the intention is there

# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) – 3 scales – all composite scores at moderate levels

- Compassion Satisfaction Scale – composite score of 27 (moderate level)\*
- Burnout Scale – composite score of 24 (moderate level)\*
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale – composite score of 24 (moderate level)\*

or more. **\*ProQOL scale: Low:** score of 22 or less; **Moderate:** scores between 23 and 41; **High:** 42

# CONSULTATION

Behavioral change expert, Dr. Stormer:

2 focus groups

4 community building lunch events

Main takeaway:

Power of Community and Relationships

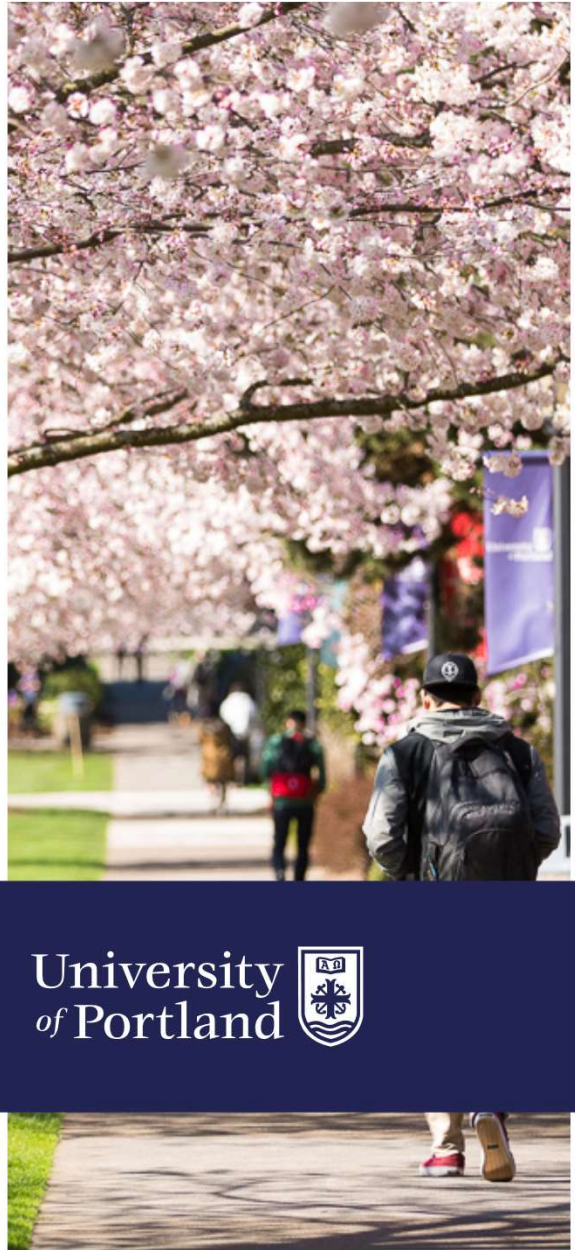
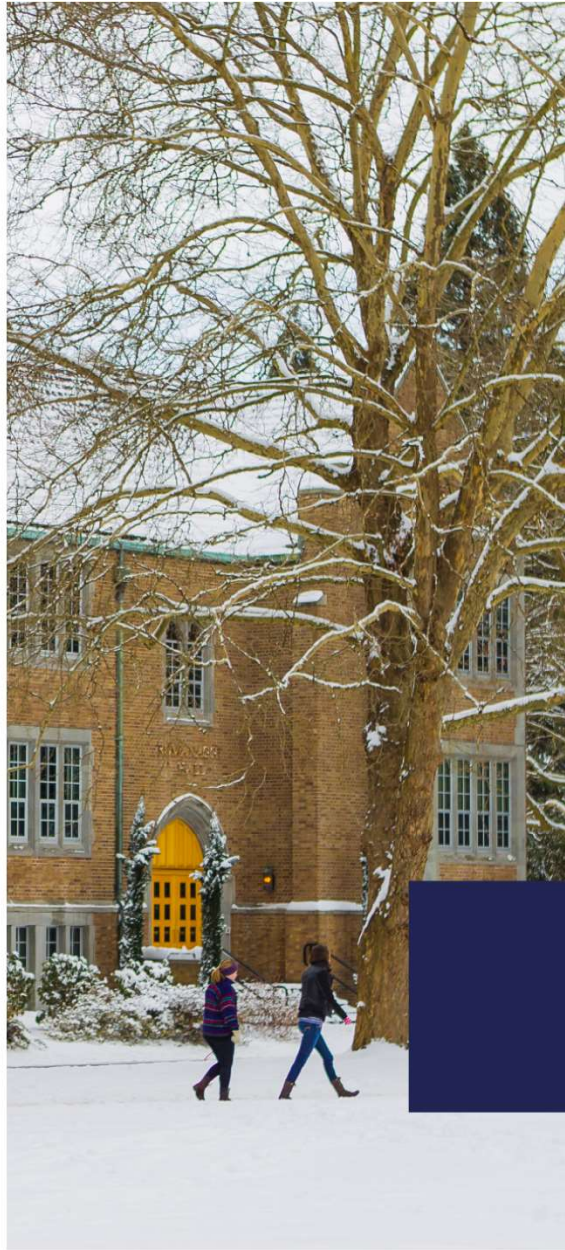
# WELLNESS PODS

5 core integrative areas:

- 1) stress and mind-body exploration
- 2) mindfulness in healthcare
- 3) healing relationship – beginning with self and self-compassion
- 4) environment – tips and techniques to create healing environment
- 5) physical activity – accountability to other pod members

Thank you!





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