

EXPLORING 'CARE FATIGUE'

Online retreat for professionals outlines ways to cope

A visual retreat to help health care professionals cope with “care fatigue” is set for this month through Wellspring Psychological Services in Monterey.

This online event is titled “Cultivating Inner Peace In A Landscape of Inner Fatigue.” It’s the first of its kind for Wellspring.

“This one’s very important to me,” says Linnea Terranova, a doctor of psychology who is CEO and founder of Wellspring. “I think the timing is crucial, because we’re coming out of the pandemic. It’s something that’s quiet and subtle, and I don’t think we even notice it.”

What Terranova has noticed among fellow health care providers is a turning off from self and a lack of energy. For caregivers it can manifest as care fatigue or a different level of exhaustion.

“The intention (of the retreat) is to bring our energy back up to really attempt to engage in why we love the work we love,” Terranova says.

The event has been narrowed to those in the health care industry, Terranova says, but it also could extend to those who work with seniors, the homebound or even family members. Anyone who gives of themselves, she says.

“We’re hoping it will create a community. A lot of people don’t talk about how they’re feeling,” Terranova says. “We don’t have to feel this way and we can help each other.”

The idea for the retreat stemmed from Terranova looking within herself and recognized a feeling of being stuck. That feeling, she says, was also being experienced by 20 mental health care providers within her group.

“It really forced us to realize that we’re in a different landscape (post-COVID-19),” she says. “In 16 years on the job I’ve never seen anything like it.

“I think we’re all feeling dry and we’re fragmented, and community has been lost ... People left jobs, left communities, left states. Connections have really changed.”

Health care, she says, struggled to stay on an in-person level. And for medical professionals coming back after the pandemic, it was kind of like dealing with the aftermath of a tsunami.

“Most of us are not paying attention to ourselves,” Terranova says. “We feel off and we don’t know why ... We’re not tuning in and we’re not paying attention to ourselves.”

Here’s what to expect from the retreat, which will be held online from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. May 18:

- **Insightful session:** Engage in a deep-diving session covering emotional and energetic intelligence, the art of self-compassion and the transformative power of breathwork.
- **Interactive exercises:** From journaling to guided imagery. The workshop is designed to provide you with practical tools and experiences.
- **Community and connection:** Share this journey with fellow health care professionals, fostering a community of support and understanding.

Terranova will lead the retreat along with Justin Baker, a licensed marriage and family therapist. They put together the event in conjunction with Mental Health Month.

Terranova offered the following suggestions for caregivers:

- **Ask the question:** “Could I be experiencing exhaustion for caring too much?”
- **Talk about it.** Having a level of curiosity about what care fatigue is and how it differs from burnout.
- **When feeling care fatigue,** know the difference between self love and self-care. They are not the same thing. Self-care is taking action to help ourselves feel better. Self love requires tuning into self. Am I loving myself?
- **Do 30-second mindful practices.** This can be anything from washing your hands with soap, gazing out the window, watching the trees move, taking a few deep breaths and really feeling the breath. Roll your shoulders, stretch from your chair.

In many cases Terranova says, we’ve forgotten why we should care for ourselves. “I need to remember why I am doing this for me. Why I’m in my life and how my body and spirit are so I can be the creator of my life and not the passive bystander,” she says.

“Life is tough. It’s unpredictable and nobody gets off this earth without challenges,” Terranova says. “They mold us into something more beautiful and gracious. ... If we’re not tuned into ourselves, the opposite is true and that leads to deprivation.”

The cost of the retreat is \$295. Register at <https://flowby-wellspring.thinklife.com/courses/cultivating-inner-peace> or at wellspringbranches.com.