



## HEALTHCARE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA

COMPLETE PERSON CARE – Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Compassion – Culture, Choice or Chance!**

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**Dr Nirmalan Ratnam**, a senior Family Physician, shares his perspective as a follower of Jesus Christ and factors that impact caring for people with compassion.

*The HCF Australia, through the Complete Person Care stream is exploring this topic and other common issues of life which impacts many people. Also, attempting to offer a deeper understanding of such issues so that followers of Jesus Christ can walk along others needing care and support in the neighbourhood, workplace and within the own families.*

# COMPASSION

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CULTURE CHOICE OR CHANCE

# COMPASSION

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- Definition
- - *Sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it*
- - *A strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a wish to help them*
- - *A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.*

# COMPASSION-Description

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- It is spontaneous
- It is timely
- It is not just an emotion but is coupled with action
- It is an expression of love manifested with mercy and kindness
- It may not be reciprocated

# COMPASSION IN ACTION

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- Luke :10:30-37

<sup>30</sup> Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among <sup>[a]</sup>thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, **he had compassion.** <sup>34</sup> **So** he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> On the next day, <sup>[b]</sup>when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ <sup>36</sup> So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

# MISSED COMPASSION

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- The thieves:
- There was no room for compassion
- A lonely man travelling on his own minding his own business
- Unarmed and unprepared to protect himself –Easy prey
- They left him to die and did not consider about him or his family
- Culture was to be focussed on self gain
- Chance was to avoid being compassionate
- Choice was to be brutal

# Missed compassion

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- Can health field be the same as the thieves?
  - Profit oriented/Monetary value on the person
  - Innocence taken for granted and truth not spoken plainly
  - Taken advantage of the vulnerability of the person/ family
  - Failing to see beyond
- This can apply in every business venture

# Missed Compassion

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- The clergy
- There was **no time** for compassion
- Compassion was lower on their priority list below duty
- Compassion was lower than their self protection
- They chose not to look but avoid
- One saw but did not look
- The other looked but was not prepared to risk
- Avoidance will make miss the compassion
- Self preservation can kill compassion

# Missed Compassion

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- We can be religious and yet miss
  - Are we busy with our own schedule and avoid being distracted by missing to look on our way
  - There may be someone who are desperate and lonely and we may be the only chance
  - We may be anxious about our own welfare and miss to show compassion

# COMPLETE COMPASSION

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- He saw and had compassion
- He felt as he was there
- He made an effort and completed it
- He handed over the care and continued on his mission and followed up with the care
- He was generous, gracious and responsible- OWNERSHIP

# COMPASSION IN ACTION

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- What made him different?
  - Love
  - Fear of God
  - His own experiences
  - Nature
  - Culture

# COMPASSION IN ACTION

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- What was the cost?
  - He was delayed
  - His wine/oil and money were spent
  - He risked rebuke or rejection
  - He undertook a responsibility of a stranger and an outsider

- What was the benefit?

He did what was the will of God and pleased Him

# COMPASSION IN ACTION

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- COMPASSION IN A LONELY PLACE TO THOSE WHO DESERVE IT IS RECOGNISED IN HEAVEN IN FRONT OF THE HEAVENLY HOSTS AND THE WHOLE UNIVERSE

# COMPASSION IN PRACTICE

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- Compassion needs to come from within
- It makes a difference
- God is compassionate and He is there to help those who are compassionate
- Compassion may not be reciprocated
- Compassion fatigue is a recognised psychological injury

# COMPASSION ASSISTED

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- When we are fresh and energetic
- When the person is in need and is not resisting
- When we have the means
- When we have the time and are not rushing
- When we are recognised

# Enemies of compassion

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- Culture of professionalism
- Profit
- Rejection
- Tiredness
- Sickness
- Difficult circumstances/ Out of comfort zones

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

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- What is it?

It is the absence/lessening ability to sympathise and empathize with those who are in need of help as before and find it difficult to be the people we would like to be.

We start well but find it difficult to continue and cope

We feel helpless/guilty/angry/pessimistic/Irritable/questioning our spiritual beliefs

# Understanding Compassion Fatigue

A guide for supporting the wellbeing of employees in care focused roles.



Visit Allianz  
Workplace Mental  
Health Hub



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# Compassion Fatigue and Mental Health in Health Care Professionals

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- Compassion fatigue is a phenomenon that affects health care providers and impacts not only an individual's professional life but also their personal life and mental health.
- At the individual level, compassion fatigue can affect an individual's personal life outside of the workplace. It can negatively influence relationships with family and friends, contribute to poor overall life satisfaction, in addition to poor mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, or substance abuse (Grabbe et al., 2021)

# Compassion fatigue- continued

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- Research shows that commonly evaluated interventions for compassion fatigue include yoga, mindfulness meditation, music therapy, or a combination of these (Cocker & Joss, 2016)
- This can be done by incorporating some of the interventions such as worksite yoga and mindfulness meditation classes. This can also be done through mental health awareness campaigns, resilience training, policy changes, and referring individuals to employee assistance programs (EAPs)

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

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- Who can get this?
  - Health care workers and care givers
  - Family members caring for the disabled/aged/bed ridden
  - First responders- Fire crew/ Police/ Ambulance/ SES personnel
  - Teachers
  - Case workers

# HANDLING COMPASSION FATIGUE

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- Recognize
- Delegate
- Share
- Renew
- Minister to those who are struggling

# RENEWAL IN CHRIST

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- Isaiah 40:28-31

*"28 DO YOU NOT KNOW? HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? THE LORD IS THE EVERLASTING GOD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. HE WILL NOT GROW TIRED OR WEARY, AND HIS UNDERSTANDING NO ONE CAN FATHOM. 29 HE GIVES STRENGTH TO THE WEARY AND INCREASES THE POWER OF THE WEAK. 30 EVEN YOUTHS GROW TIRED AND WEARY, AND YOUNG MEN STUMBLE AND FALL; 31 BUT THOSE WHO HOPE IN THE LORD WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. THEY WILL SOAR ON WINGS LIKE EAGLES; THEY WILL RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY, THEY WILL WALK AND NOT BE FAINT."*

Philippians 4:13

*13 I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME.*

# GUILT AND CONDEMNATION

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- God does not want us to be condemned but wants us to be convicted
- Are we feeling guilty of failing to be compassionate?
- Jesus wants to relieve us from our struggles
- God promises to give us the strength when we cannot keep going