

COMBATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

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OBJECTIVES



Define compassion fatigue and understand its effects



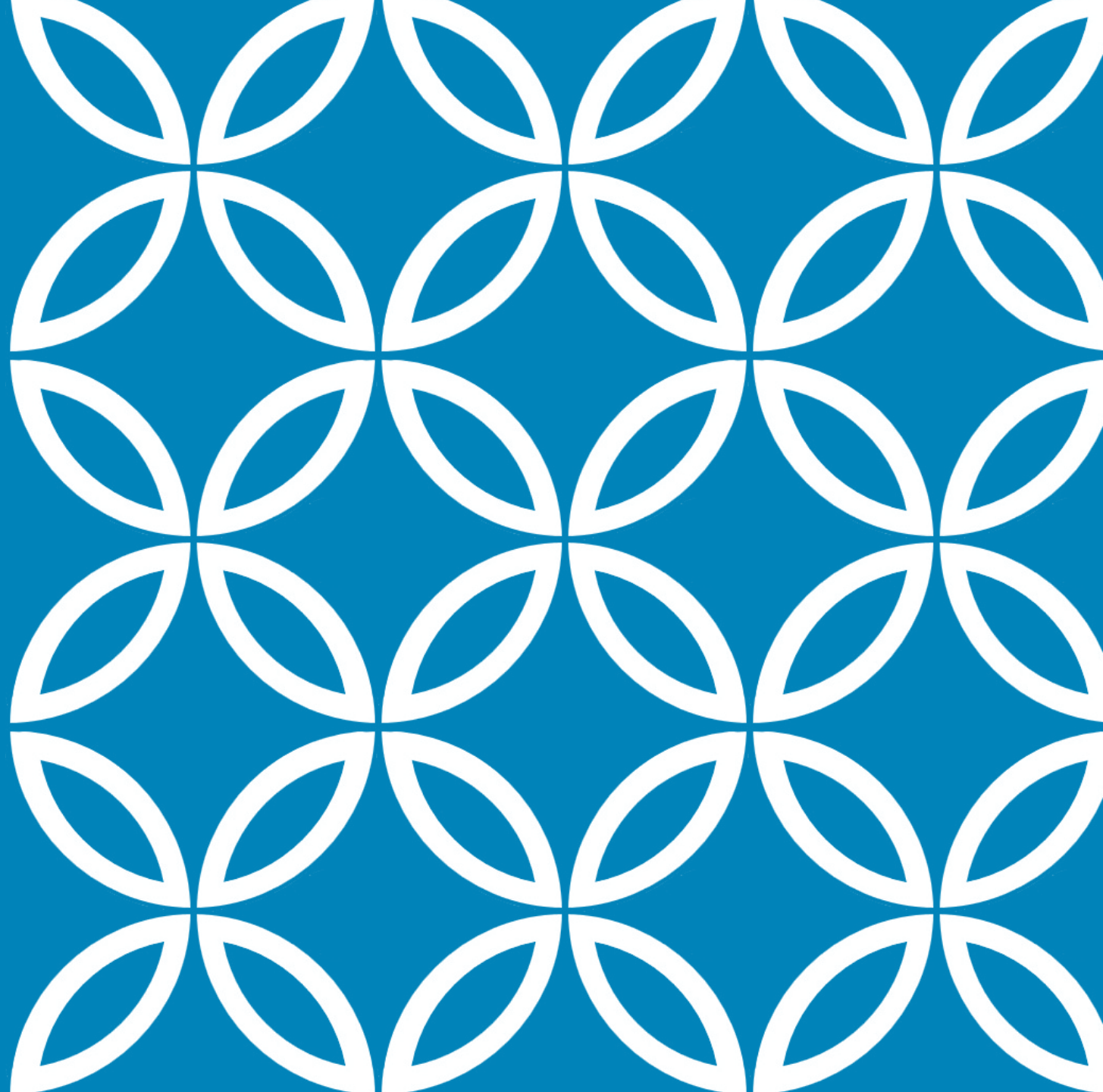
Reflect on the scientific evidence behind self-compassion



Practice self-compassion and loving kindness meditation

A QUICK BACKGROUND

And a few credentials...



BURNOUT

❖ World Health Organization: “syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed”

- Energy depletion or exhaustion
- Negative feelings towards one's career
- Reduced professional productivity

Special
Report

Physician Burnout: Causes, Consequences,



Review

Factors Related to Physician Burnout and Its Consequences: A Review

Rikinkumar S. P.

- 1 Department of
- 2 Department of
- 3 Department of
- 4 Department of

JAMA | Original Investigation

Prevalence of Burnout Among Physicians A Systematic Review

Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, 26(2), 2019, 106–114

doi: 10.1093/jamia/ocy145

Advance Access Publication Date: 5 December 2018

Research and Applications



editorial page 1109

related article page 1114

supplemental content

Research and Applications

Physician stress information tec

Rebekah L Gardner,^{1,2} E
Sara Poplau,⁴ Philip J K

REFLECTION

Physician Burnout: Resilience Training is Only Part of the Solution



COLLECTION REVIEW

Burnout syndrome among medical residents: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Hugo Rodrigues¹, Ricardo Cobucci², Antônio Oliveira³, João Victor Cabral⁴,
Leany Medeiros⁵, Karen Gurgel⁶, Tházio Souza⁶, Ana Katherine Gonçalves^{1,7}*

the highest-risk groups for burnout
along the hardest hit. Many health

COMPASSION FATIGUE'S ROLE



- ❖ Compassion fatigue: burnout and secondary traumatic stress
- ❖ Feelings of distress & guilt
- ❖ Effects: 2x more patient safety incidents, poor professionalism, and poor patient-reported satisfaction

SIGNS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

- ❖ Signs of physical anxiety
- ❖ Sense of hopelessness
- ❖ Decreased ability to empathize
- ❖ Irritability / impatience
- ❖ Decreased productivity
- ❖ Reduced ability to feel pleasure
- ❖ Trouble sleeping
- ❖ Isolation
- ❖ Self-doubt



Checking in

SELF-COMPASSION



- ❖ We tend to beat ourselves up – especially when we make a mistake or when others treat us poorly
- ❖ Harm?

SELF-COMPASSION

❖ To prevent compassion fatigue, we must be compassionate to ourselves first



SELF-COMPASSION

❖ To prevent compassion fatigue, we must be compassionate to ourselves first

❖ How?

- Remembering to be kind to ourselves
- We don't always have control over other people's suffering
- Our inner dialogue
- The root of others' negativities



Focused Attention

This practice typically directs the meditator to concentrate on the in-and-out cycle of breathing. Even for the expert, the mind wanders, and the object of focus must be restored. A brain-scanning study at Emory University has pinpointed distinct brain areas that become involved as attention shifts.

Mindfulness

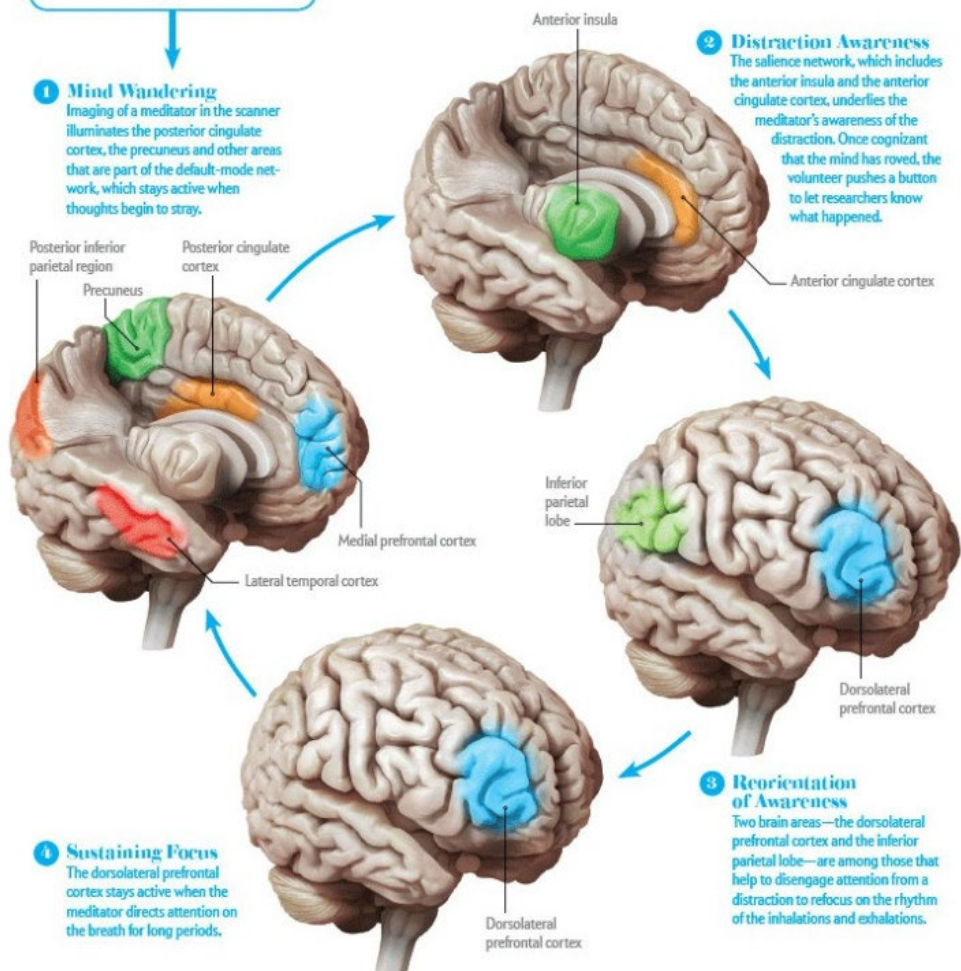
Also called open-monitoring meditation, mindfulness entails observing sights, sounds and other sensations, including internal bodily sensations and thoughts, without being carried away by them. Expert meditators have diminished activity in anxiety-related areas, such as the insular cortex and the amygdala.

Compassion and Loving Kindness

In this practice, the meditator cultivates a feeling of benevolence directed toward other people, whether friend or enemy. Brain regions that fire up when putting oneself in the place of another—the temporoparietal junction, for instance—show an increase in activity.

1 Mind Wandering

Imaging of a meditator in the scanner illuminates the posterior cingulate cortex, the precuneus and other areas that are part of the default-mode network, which stays active when thoughts begin to stray.



2 Distraction Awareness

The salience network, which includes the anterior insula and the anterior cingulate cortex, underlies the meditator's awareness of the distraction. Once cognizant that the mind has roved, the volunteer pushes a button to let researchers know what happened.

3 Reorientation of Awareness

Two brain areas—the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the inferior parietal lobe—are among those that help to disengage attention from a distraction to refocus on the rhythm of the inhalations and exhalations.

4 Sustaining Focus

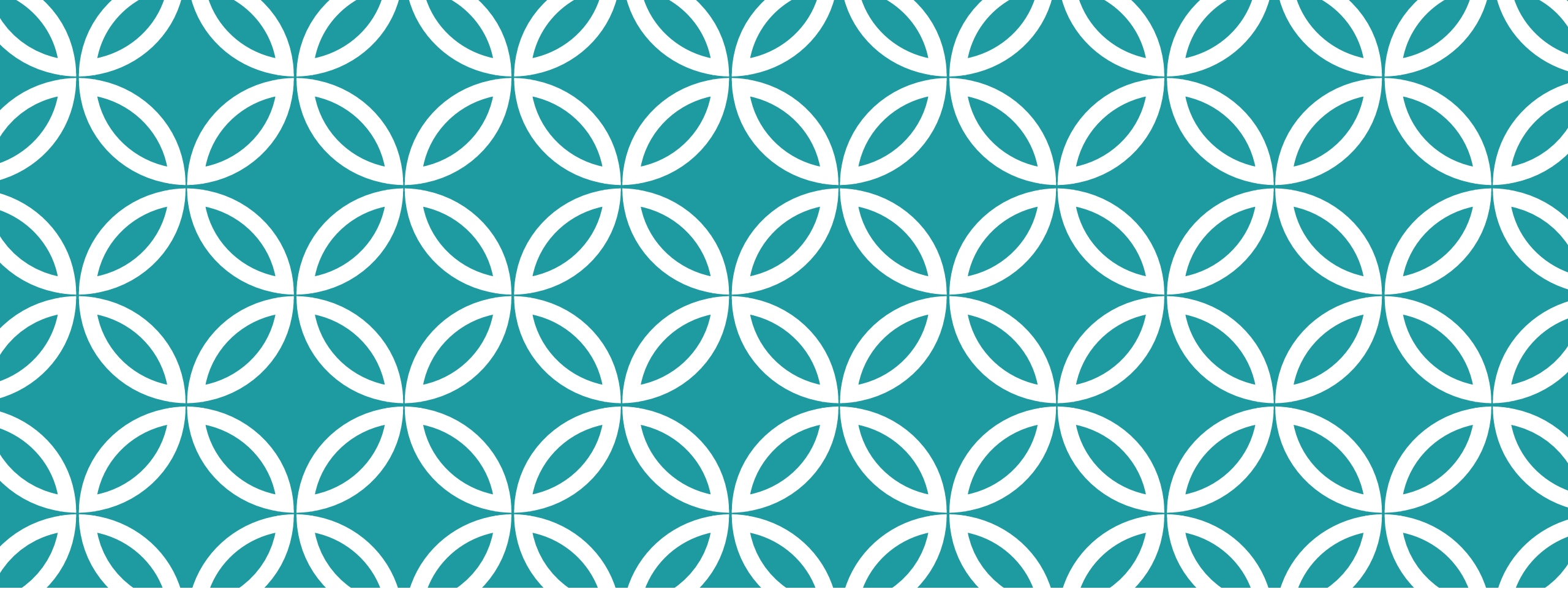
The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex stays active when the meditator directs attention on the breath for long periods.

SCIENCE ON MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION PRACTICE

MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION PRACTICE

- ❖ Please take off anything that may “weigh” you down
- ❖ Sit up tall (not against the back of your chair)
- ❖ Close your eyes





APPLICATION IN REAL LIFE

Challenging
Interactions?

SUMMARY



- ❖ Compassion fatigue is related to burnout, and can have serious consequences
- ❖ Mindful / loving kindness meditation has scientific evidence of physiologic benefits
- ❖ There is a practice to help!
- ❖ May all beings be happy (including ourselves)!



THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS? THOUGHTS?

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❖ Neff and Germer's Mindful Self-Compassion 8-week program: <https://self-compassion.org/the-program/>
- ❖ Vipassana 10-day meditation retreat: <https://www.dhamma.org>
- ❖ Stanford's self assessments: <https://wellmd.stanford.edu/healthy/mindfulness.html>
- ❖ Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction 8-week program: <https://palousemindfulness.com/>

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