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**Leisure Spiritual Coping Model: A Framework for Coping with Compassion Fatigue**

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Introduction

As reported in an article by the Washington Post, between 35-54% of nurses and doctors claim to be “burned out” from caring for individuals in their settings (Wan, 2019). This creates tremendous stress on the healthcare system, with it costing an estimated 4.6 billion dollars as a result of medical personnel reducing hours, quitting their current position, or leaving the field of medicine altogether (Wan, 2019). Studies on quality of life for family caregivers have found spirituality and beliefs/practices to positively impact the quality of life and coping with stress (Newmeyer et al., 2016; Chafjiri et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Rivera & Rosario-Rodriguez, 2018). Recreation Therapy, using concepts and coping strategies presented in the *Leisure-Spiritual Coping Model*, may produce positive outcomes in working with medical professionals to present healthy coping strategies to reduce and prevent stress associated with caring for individuals with disabilities.

Explanation of conceptual/theoretical framework

The *Leisure-Spiritual Coping Model*, developed by Heintzman (2008), provides a holistic way of coping with a stressor through a person’s beliefs, perceptions of the stressor, and leisure participation. With participation in leisure that is meaning-making, spiritually connecting, and behaviorally coping with the stressor, a person will cope in a healthier/holistic manner and have the overall goal of improving well-being (Heintzman, 2008; Ross & Ashton-Shaeffer, 2009).

Application and Translation of Theory in RT Practice

In stressful situations, persons often begin with examining their own beliefs and “identifying what is most important to them” as the start to the coping process (Showalter, 2010; Chafjiri et al., 2017). While there is literature that connects the concept of spirituality/spiritual practices and activities as a coping strategy, there is no mention of the Leisure-Spiritual Coping Model as the driving mechanism behind the coping process. Recreation therapy, through values clarification and leisure education, would be able to assist clients in identifying their beliefs and attitudes toward life, leisure, and spiritual domains. Upon identifying these factors, recreation therapy could reinforce positive coping behavior using leisure interests that are aligned with the model, promoting spiritual leisure interests (including nature and non-traditional spiritual practices) that provide a connection to spiritual self/being, and help a person rediscover their meaning/purpose for working where they are, and reevaluate the situation through a different lens. Recreation therapy may be incorporated into company wellness programs and educational trainings on stress management, leisure education, and values clarification. Recreation therapy has the opportunity to facilitate leisure experiences for team building and opportunities to increase social support for employees, and provide leisure education for more positive coping, holistic and self-care interventions to be used to prevent and alleviate stress from providing care to those with disabilities. This model would also be of benefit to staff during a pandemic, such as COVID-19, offering staff a healthy way of coping with the stress of providing care during a time when levels of anxiety and fear are at their highest.

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