COMPASSION FATIGUE: THE COST OF CARING IN AN AMERICAN INDIAN SCHOOL COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Educators who work with Native American students often encounter and experience the personal trauma that students bring into the classroom. The risk of dealing with intense student trauma is the development of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. Compassion fatigue is a result of bottling up emotions and is often referred to as the cost of caring (Smith, 2013). The goals of this study were to: (1) determine the rates of compassion fatigue for educators working in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district; (2) explore how teachers within this district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being; and (3) understand what educators with this district perceive as important for educational leaders to know in identifying and providing support to teachers with compassion fatigue. The embedded case research model used the Professional Quality of Life survey to determine compassion fatigue scores. Then, an interview pool was formed based upon the compassion fatigue range scores. Six participants were choses to be interviewed for the research study. Qualitative data analysis was completed with a strict focus on trustworthiness and validity. Three themes were developed-student home life, the school's response to trauma, and teacher/student trauma. These results demonstrated that teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district struggle with compassion fatigue and have minimal emotional support from educational leaders for compassion fatigue. School district leaders must address the issue of compassion fatigue locally and push for systemic reform throughout Indian education.

CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

Background

This Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is similar to many rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. Alcohol abuse, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse are all traumatic events that happen daily on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. A consequence of such traumatic events is that, inevitably, students with trauma will enter school and bring that trauma with them.

A hearing in 2014 by the United States Committee on Indian Affairs helps to set the foundation for how severe traumatic events are for children on Indian Reservations. John Tester from Montana stated that children from Indian Reservations are exposed to trauma at a rate of two and half more times than Non-Native children (United States Committee on Indian Affairs, 2014). The hearing also determined that drug and alcohol abuse are the leading causes of trauma inflicted on Native American children. It is rare to find a Native American child who has not been exposed to trauma due to alcohol abuse, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Children who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation have experienced suicide, murder, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. These children do not leave their traumatic experiences at the school doorstep.

A recent incident sheds light on the issues that residents of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation have dealt with. Meth use on Indian Reservations has seen an increase (Wulfhorst, 2016). On this Northern Plains Indian Reservation, meth use has resulted in a 40% increase in crime. A meth-addicted grandmother recently killed a 13-month-old

infant and threw the baby into a garbage can. All too often meth-addicted mothers are delivering babies that are addicted to meth and need to be airlifted to a regional medical center. These incidents are all too common on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

Shielding Native American children from these traumatic events is impossible. Students who witness such trauma will carry that emotional baggage to school. Educators who deal with children who experience these types of secondary traumatic experiences can develop compassion fatigue (Abraham-Cook, 2012). Unfortunately, those students who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation find that this continual trauma they experience will cause issues at school also.

This Northern Rockies school district is considered rural and isolated. The current enrollment for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School is 920 students. Of these 920 students, approximately 97% claim either Sioux or Assiniboine heritage (K. Erickson, personal communication, November 10, 2019). The amount of trauma each student has inflicted upon them is immeasurable, and it is the cause of most of the emotional baggage carried into classrooms. Traumatized students will often have lower grades, higher absenteeism, and more behavior problems (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008). Educators who continually work with traumatized students are more prone to develop compassion fatigue (Adams et al., 2008). The students at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District bring individualized trauma into the school and most educators do not have the resiliency to deter compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.

Recognizing and treating student trauma needs is a priority at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. Students are offered counseling, evaluations, and support in order to combat their own direct trauma. In contrast, recognizing and treating traumatized employees is not a priority. Educators who work with traumatized children are susceptible to student trauma and will often internalize the trauma (The National Traumatic Stress Network, 2008). Internalizing secondary trauma can lead to compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is often referred to as the cost of caring (Mckim & Smith-Adcock, 2014). Recognizing compassion fatigue early in order to deter it doesn't typically happen on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

The emotion attached to teaching can be both rewarding and difficult. Teachers feel a huge sense of responsibility regarding the success and failures of their students. As an educator, it is understood that not all students will succeed within a set period of time and not all students will fail. The frustration and reward of teaching at times is a roller coaster ride. At times it feels like the teacher cares more about learning than the students do, and eventually, this feeling can be a factor in leaving the profession. Inevitably the strong emotion attached to teaching, especially those students who have been traumatized, will lead to compassion fatigue or compassion satisfaction. It is critical that teachers understand that compassion fatigue is considered a cost to caring for their students (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008). One significant result of compassion fatigue is teachers might experience increased irritability with their students or decreased concentration on the events occurring in their classrooms. The signs of compassion fatigue can be more complicated to recognize if the teachers themselves are

dealing with their own traumatic experiences (The American Institute of Stress, 2014). Without early recognition (Mathieau, 2013) of compassion fatigue, teachers typically become a victim to it. A consequence of compassion fatigue is teacher burnout at which point the teacher is unmotivated to do their job.

Secondary traumatic or post-secondary trauma is trauma received from others (Hiles et al., 2015). Secondary trauma comes from working in trauma-related environments like hospitals and schools (Hannah & Wollgar, 2018). Educators who work with traumatized students like those on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation are prone to secondary trauma because the students who live in traumatic environments bring it to school. This type of indirect trauma can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout (Hopwood, 2018). It is critically important that school district officials understand that students who live in communities and environments with high rates of trauma will have an immense effect on their educators. This anticipation of student trauma must be recognized early by school districts in order to prevent compassion fatigue (Hopwood & Loi, 2018).

An often overlooked but critical piece to early intervention for compassion fatigue and secondary trauma is the educators' history of personal trauma (Adams et al., 2008). Adverse childhood experiences are those individual traumatic events such as sexual abuse, domestic abuse, child abuse, neglect, and abandonment that are experienced by children (Hiles et al., 2015). Educators who have a history of trauma and adverse childhood experiences are more prone to compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and

burnout. Educators who have a history of traumatic events and are currently working with traumatized individuals need early interventions and resiliency plans.

Compassion satisfaction is the feeling that you are in control of the environment you are working in (Mckim & Smith-Adcock, 2014). Compassion satisfaction can result if the secondary traumatic stress experienced by educators is being regulated properly and the educators feel they are in control of their emotions (Mairean, 2016). Compassion satisfaction results from the ability to incorporate suppression strategies the help keep compassion fatigue at a distance and keep job satisfaction high. Although achieving compassion satisfaction is key, those who suffer adverse childhood experiences will find achieving compassion satisfaction on the job more difficult.

Problem Statement

Teachers working in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district work with students facing many difficult issues that prove to be problematic for the communities they live and work in. These challenges include physical abuse, emotional abuse, parental domestic abuse, student and adult suicide, low student attendance, student truancy issues, and continual student behavioral issues that disrupt the classroom. Helping students deal with these traumatic issues and be successful in these difficult circumstances can lead to compassion fatigue among educators (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2014).

In a recent study on criminal prosecutors in Missoula, Montana it was found that secondary trauma can result in depression and possibly suicide (O'Brien, 2017). As one clinical social worker who worked with the prosecutors stated:

> Our best workers are the ones who are most susceptible to secondary trauma. They're utilizing themselves in such an open and responsive and effective way to support their client. In doing that they're receiving the client's experience deeply in the fiber of their own body, emotion, and mind. (O'Brien, 2017, p. 2)

This situation reflects the same expectation and similar working conditions that teachers experience. Educators are expected to give all they have and allowing any sort of emotional weakness is frowned upon. The concerning piece in this is the transfer of trauma from the student to the educator. The expectation is that asking for help must be encouraged and normalized.

Existing studies demonstrate that compassion fatigue among teachers can result in higher absenteeism, lower retention rates for teachers, less flexibility, and a negative attitude towards administrators (Smith, 2013). Furthermore, if symptoms of compassion fatigue go untreated, there exists a higher risk of burnout among educators (Abraham-Cook, 2012).

High-poverty schools have a higher teacher turnover rate than schools serving wealthier communities (Hotchkiss & Enz, 2010). Unfortunately, scant research exists regarding how schools and teachers in rurally isolated schools address and cope with compassion fatigue, and no studies were found that address compassion fatigue in educators working in schools serving American Indian communities (National Native Children's Trauma Center, 2014).

Purpose Statement

There exists a gap between what is known about compassion fatigue and in understanding the extent to which educators in this rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation community experience compassion fatigue and implement interventions towards improving the issue. The focus of this research study is to determine the extent to which teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district experience compassion fatigue; determine the teachers' perceptions of the effects of student trauma on their well-being; and understand the educators' perceived barriers to improving their well-being. By improving the understanding of compassion fatigue, programs can be developed that can address the issues of compassion fatigue among educators working in this school district.

The possibility that teachers on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district are heading for the compassion fatigue warning zone (Mathieu, 2013) needs to be researched and steps need to be taken by the school district to curb compassion fatigue. The compassion fatigue warning zone is that emotional place where the admission that the educator is struggling with compassion fatigue must be recognized. A goal of this research study is that an employee wellness program rooted in identifying and developing support programs for compassion fatigue in this school district will develop.

Keeping compassion fatigue to a minimum once the compassion warning zone is entered (Pfiferling & Gilley, 2000) is the goal of the research project. The result of this research project is the hope that school districts in rural, high-poverty areas like this school district will acknowledge that compassion fatigue is a major emotional condition

that many of their staff members develop yet is treatable. There are no research studies that have been conducted on Indian Reservation schools in regards to compassion fatigue; thus, the importance of this research is to identify when educators are heading towards the compassion fatigue warning zone and implement an employee wellness program to deter it.

Research Questions

In order to guide this dissertation, the following research questions were developed:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?
2. How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being?
3. What do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important to the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

Overview of Methods

A case study design was used to answer the research questions bounded geographically by using schools located on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district and functionally by educators working in the school district. The Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) survey was used to determine the prevalence of

compassion fatigue for teachers in the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The current employee population of the school district is 109 employees. The ProQOL survey was distributed via Survey Monkey and the results were used to purposefully select participants who were currently experiencing compassion fatigue, and interview data were collected from these purposefully selected participants. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the interview data were analyzed using the constant-comparative method.

Significance of Study

The significance of this research study is an in-depth description of teachers' perceptions of compassion fatigue and the perceived levels of support currently available for compassion fatigue for teachers in this school district who work with students who are experiencing high levels of trauma. Keeping job satisfaction at a high rate is key for employees and preventing burnout (Mairean, 2016). Dealing with student trauma on a daily basis allows for compassion fatigue to develop, which can result in headaches, stomach aches, and anxiety (Newsom, 2010). Researching current working conditions to determine any issues with compassion fatigue is a first step in facilitating teacher emotional well-being in this school district.

Early identification of compassion fatigue for educators is the most important first step in developing a program to deter compassion fatigue (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2014). Caring educators, like those on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation, are at a high-risk category to develop compassion fatigue (Douglas, 2010). Classrooms can be very stressful situations, and if early warning systems for compassion

fatigue are not available, then compassion fatigue secondary could develop (Mathieau, 2013).

The significance of this research study is to determine the prevalence of compassion fatigue for teachers working on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. Determining the prevalence of compassion fatigue will fulfill the main purpose of this research study, which is to help rural school districts build access to effective treatment options for compassion fatigue. Early identification of educators who are heading towards the compassion fatigue warning zone (Mathieau, 2013) is key in this research study.

Too often there is shame in admitting that you are struggling with compassion fatigue. Yet, avoiding secondary trauma when working with students like those in this school district who bring vast amounts of trauma into the classroom is not possible. Overlooking compassion fatigue when educating students with trauma is also not an option. By determining the extent to which educators in this school district are experiencing compassion fatigue and seeking out the perceptions of educators who may be experiencing compassion fatigue, a better understanding of this issue can emerge from which to build a solution. The norm of not allowing educators to admit they are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress must be eliminated (Huggard & Dixon, 2011).

The amount of research that exists dealing directly with Indian Reservations and student trauma is very limited. Teacher turnover at this school district has a three-year average of 22% (K. Erickson, personal communication, November 17, 2019). The

possibility exists that compassion fatigue is contributing to high teacher turnover rates. Furthermore, high-poverty schools have a smaller pool of applicants and have a higher rate of turnover than more affluent schools (Hotchkiss & Kiss, 2010). This research study may provide information towards improving retention of educators in high-poverty, rurally isolated schools.

Definition of Terms

Compassion Fatigue

For the purposes of this study, compassion fatigue is referred to as:

> The natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other, characterized by a state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma experienced by the people that one seeks to help (Figley, 2005, p. 7).

Compassion Satisfaction

For the purposes of this study, compassion satisfaction is referred to as:

> The pleasure you derive from being able to do your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society through your work with people who need care (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013, p. 2).

Burnout

For the purposes of this study, burnout is referred to as:

> Burnout is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or

> they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013, p. 3).

It is possible to still enjoy your occupation and suffer burnout simultaneously.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

For the purposes of this study, secondary traumatic stress is referred to as:

> Secondary traumatic stress describes the experience of psychological distress and posttraumatic stress symptoms resulting from helping clients who have been exposed to trauma (Salloum & Johnco, 2015, p. 55)

Secondary traumatic stress must develop in the work environment and must result from working with clients who are suffering from individual trauma.

Summary

The children living on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation experience a vast amount of traumatic events in their lives. Research is limited in determining compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout as perceived by educators serving Indian Reservations in particular. Therefore, this dissertation will examine the compassion fatigue rates for this school district and explore the perceptions of educators who may be experiencing compassion fatigue.

Looking at this phenomenon through a qualitative lens will allow for a deeper understanding and examination of how student trauma affects educators at this school district. In order to prevent burnout and reduce turnover, interventions need to be the norm and not the exception (Rochelle, 2018). Schools are organizations that simply do

not allow for educators to admit that they are having mental health issues like compassion fatigue and burnout. Determining the extent to which educators in this school district experience compassion fatigue and clarifying educator perceptions of working with high numbers of children experiencing trauma is the first step toward clarifying the issue and resolving the situation. The next chapter, Literature Review, examines what is currently known about compassion fatigue and its impact on educators.

CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district is to determine the rates of compassion fatigue for teachers using the ProQOL survey. These rates of compassion fatigue as determined by the ProQOL survey will help develop a pool of potential interviewees who are most at risk of suffering from compassion fatigue at this school district. Determining the extent to which educators in this school district experience compassion fatigue and clarifying educator perceptions of working with high numbers of children experiencing trauma is the first step toward clarifying the issue and resolving the situation. Traumatized students like those on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation will often bring their trauma into the classroom.

Wrapping around this condition of compassion fatigue are the variables that make all schools successful: an environment that is conducive to learning and expectations that can be met by both the teacher and student. Positive school environments are the envy of any school system (Bosworth et al., 2011), and with students who have such an array of individual trauma, it is difficult to maintain a positive school environment. The impact that student trauma has is referred to as compassion fatigue and the symptoms are anxiety, nightmares, headaches, and stomach aches (Newsom, 2010). It is impossible to deter student trauma from entering the classroom simply because a teacher's ability to teach rely on factors that they have no control over.

This study is focusing on an issue that many rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation teachers deal with: compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is often referred

to as the price of caring (Mathieu, 2007). In order to better understand the idea of compassion fatigue and the possible effect it has on educators, four factors need to be explored: the understanding of what compassion fatigue is and how it differs from burnout; the symptoms and treatments that educators need to be aware of in order to recognize the possible onset of compassion fatigue; individual trauma history; and mandatory abuse reporting that educators are required to do.

Additionally, to fully understand compassion fatigue and its impact, one needs to also understand the relationship between compassion fatigue and similar concepts such as compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The relationships between these constructs were explored within the context of teachers who currently work on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations.

Compassion Fatigue, Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout in the Educational Setting

There exists minimal data on the rates of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout with educators working in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. One major study in 2012 by Shannon Abraham-Cook looked at those educators who work in high-poverty, inner-city schools. The study surveyed 111 inner-city teachers in Newark, New Jersey grades pre-K through 12th grade. Some of the demographic data for the group surveyed is as follows: 22 male and 89 female; 50 white, 40 black, 13 Hispanic educators; all of the participants had bachelor degrees or higher; those surveyed had an average of 15.7 years of experience (Abraham-Cook, 2012).

The study by Abraham-Cook (2012) was an in-depth study that considered poverty when determining the effect of compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion satisfaction on educators. The results of the study determined that all participants had high levels of compassion fatigue and moderate levels of compassion satisfaction and burnout. Three distinct factors were found to contribute significantly to compassion fatigue: secondary traumatic stress, work-related time management, and stressors at work.

One of the key issues that this study found was that burnout was linked directly to compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. A key finding was that the student environmental factors such as poverty had little significance in the level of burnout (Abraham-Cook, 2012). The high compassion fatigue rates were mainly a result of working students who had brought trauma into the learning environment. This type of secondary traumatic stress can be very detrimental to the mental health of all educators (Davis & Palladino, 2011).

This study by Abraham-Cook is a significant study on working with students in high-poverty areas and the findings are key. Compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout are issues that educators encounter and school districts often fail to offer support for.

Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue Model

A key construct in understanding the impact of student trauma on educators is understanding how compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction are contributing factors to each other. The Professional Quality of Life Compassion model developed by

Hudnall-Stamm (2013) demonstrates that compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction stress is a three-layered emotional condition derived from the following: work environment (school), client environment (student), and personal environment (teacher) All three conditions contribute to compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. These complex relationships with compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction are furthered defined below:

Figure 1: Complex Relationships

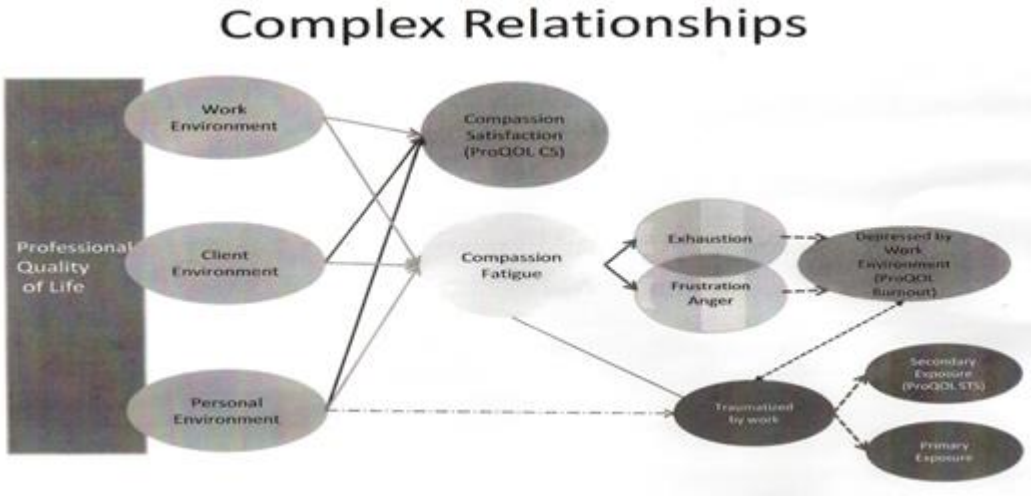


Figure 1. Relationship between work environment, client environment, and personal environment and trauma (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013).

A key concept in understanding the compassion stress and compassion fatigue model and their complex relationships is that the teacher must be working in an environment where they are exposed to continual trauma in order for compassion fatigue to develop. Without the exposure to continual student trauma, compassion fatigue will not occur. The ProQOL complex relationship model exemplifies the theoretical framework used in this research study: that depression, exhaustion, frustration, and anger

will develop (Hudnall-Stamm, 2012) if early onset of compassion fatigue is not recognized and treated.

Trauma and the Professional Quality of Life Model

The ProQOL model demands that in order for teachers to deter compassion fatigue recognition of the condition must happen early. Teachers who have a vast history of personal trauma could be a red flag for early-onset compassion fatigue. Having teachers who were continually exposed to traumatic events is something that should be concerning for all school districts (McKim & Smith-Adcock, 2014). One example of previous traumatic events that teachers might have experienced is adverse childhood experiences. Adverse childhood experiences like sexual abuse and emotional abuse can be a red flag for school districts in trying to diagnose compassion fatigue. Whether it is adverse childhood experiences or a mixture of student trauma and previous trauma the focus of this research study is to identify rates of compassion fatigue for teachers based upon the ProQOL survey and determine what interventions can help deter it.

The following chart gives a deeper understanding of the Theoretical Model of Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). The goal of this research study on this school district is to deter compassion fatigue and increase compassion satisfaction. The compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue model below helps to understand how if compassion fatigue is not diagnosed early, the possibility of burnout and secondary trauma evolves.

Figure 2. CS-CF Model

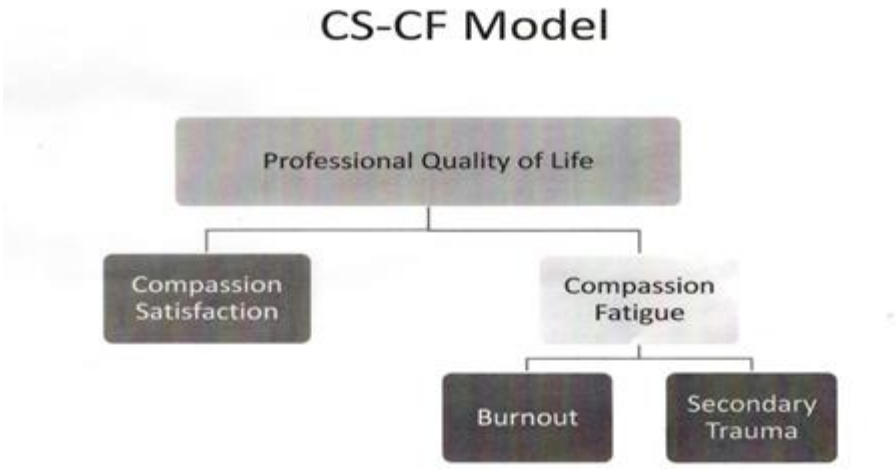


Figure 2. Conceptual model of the relationship between compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013).

The compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue model reiterates an important goal of this research project in improving compassion satisfaction for teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. Working in trauma-related environments like schools allows compassion fatigue to thrive (Hannah & Woolgar, 2018). The compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue model looks to improve the ProQOL in trauma-related environments by identifying the rates of compassion fatigue.

Understanding Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue exists only if an educator is dealing with traumatic events (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). Examples of daily traumatic events that teachers who work with children on Montana's Indian Reservations deal with are physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. In dealing with these daily traumatic events, the possibility of developing compassion fatigue exists.

It is imperative that compassion fatigue is not to be confused with burnout. Burnout will develop over time and often will take years and is not directly linked to trauma. (The American Institute of Stress, 2014). Compassion fatigue has a much more rapid onset and can be managed and eliminated if diagnosed early. Compassion fatigue is rooted deeply in caring and is a negative aspect of helping those who are suffering (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). It is possible that years of dealing with compassion fatigue can be a contributing factor to burnout. One key difference in compassion fatigue vs. burnout is that burnout can take years to develop whereas compassion fatigue can develop rather quickly when the teacher is exposed to significant traumatic events (McKim & Smith-Adcock, 2014).

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

There are several early signs that an educator might encounter, unknowingly, when experiencing compassion fatigue symptoms. The following are some of the signs that an educator must be aware of: (1) exhaustion, (2) reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy, (3) anger and irritability, (4) increased use of alcohol and drugs, (5) dread of working with certain students/families, (6) diminished sense of enjoyment as a teacher, (7) difficulty separating work life from personal life, (8) more absenteeism from work, (9) problems with personal relationships, (10) and an impaired ability to make decisions for students (Mathieau, 2007). It is critically important that teachers who work with traumatized students on rurally isolated, high-poverty Indian Reservations understand that compassion fatigue can have an immediate onset and that it is unavoidable. Furthermore, compassion fatigue is more likely to evolve when you work with children

who are continually living in traumatic situations themselves and bringing that trauma to school.

Understanding Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is the idea that you are emotionally stable in your profession and you are able to fulfill the duties of the job (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). Mindfulness and self-regulation are two important concepts that help regulate compassion satisfaction (Martin-Cuellar, Atencio, Kelly, & Lardier, 2018). Mindfulness is the inner voice that tells us that we are capable of doing the job and to be careful about how the job is affecting us emotionally. Self-regulation is the ability to not let emotions get too high, which in turn can result in compassion fatigue.

A recent study by Jennings (2014) of 35 pre-school teachers determine that if a teacher perceives the inability to do the job and lack compassion satisfaction and mindfulness, they are then targets for compassion fatigue. More so, when dealing with difficult children, the rate of compassion satisfaction was lower if the teacher felt they were not capable of doing the job. The study by Jennings (2014) further determined that job fulfillment and the ability to do the job fosters compassion satisfaction whereas the perception of the inability to do the job can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout.

Compassion satisfaction is rooted in those who are generally happy and optimistic. (Jennings, 2014). Compassion satisfaction is the positive feeling that all teachers have in themselves in their ability to do their job (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). It is also the feeling as a teacher that you are capable of reaching those interpersonal goals that have been set forth. The ability to have emotional control at work is another factor

with compassion satisfaction (Mckim & Smith-Adcock, 2014). Not having emotional control can often lead to uncontrollable classrooms and a lack of compassion satisfaction.

One finding in the study by Cetrano et al. (2017) that is pertinent to the relationship between burnout and compassion satisfaction is the demand of time on employees. The pressure to get the job done in a certain time frame was a finding that has implications for this research study. For compassion satisfaction to remain high and burnout to remain low, the organization must relay the expectations to the employee about the time frame needed to complete the task.

Understanding Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Understanding Burnout

Burnout can result from high levels of compassion fatigue but can also exist alone (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). Job burnout can result from total exhaustion, a loss of enthusiasm, or a feeling that you simply cannot perform the job you are doing (Valour, 2018). Some factors that can lead to burnout are ineffective supervisors, bullying on the job, and lack of emotional support from the employer. Burnout can be a systematic problem for organizations and will often result in a high turnover rate. Too often organizations treat the ramifications of burnout simply as an ineffective employee and will often be complacent on preventing employees from leaving because of it.

One major difference between burnout and compassion fatigue ties directly to secondary traumatic stress. Burnout can evolve in any employee in any job setting. Burnout can develop whether or not secondary traumatic stress exists (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). Compassion fatigue needs to have secondary trauma to develop.

Symptoms of Burnout

Job burnout is simply a feeling of not having the energy and enthusiasm to fulfill the current job duties. Further as Pietarien et al., (2013) stated, “Burnout develops gradually as a result of extensive and prolonged work-related stress” (p. 2). A key distinction between burnout and compassion fatigue is that burnout takes longer to develop than does compassion fatigue. Feeling apathetic towards the job and being frustrated are also symptoms that burnout could be developing (The American Institute for Stress, 2012).

A recent study on special education teachers exemplifies the symptoms of teacher burnout. Six special education teachers were interviewed, and the following trends were found: too much paperwork, lack of professional support from the school, and too much student stress (Davis & Palladino, 2011). The study was a concrete example of how the expectations for the job and continual constraints can lead to burnout. The study also determined that if special education teachers continue to have complete vast amounts of paperwork, they will continue to suffer burnout and the school will have a high rate of turnover.

It is common for employees to leave a job because they are simply tired of it and they have a loss of enthusiasm (Valour, 2018). Burnout is often the result of stress at work and can be directly related to the following: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inadequacy (Pietarinen et al., 2013). Those employees who are suffering burnout will often suffer exhaustion and cynicism at the same time. Once the employee develops exhaustion and cynicism, it is quite possible that any sort of coping strategies could cease to exist

A recent research study on teacher burnout was conducted with 461 K-6 students and teachers in high-poverty schools in Canada (Hoglund et al., 2015). The schools were all considered schools in need of improvement and were in the lowest quartile of academic performance based on their state achievement test. The research study found that a lack of peer support systems and classes with more diverse populations of students put those teachers at a higher risk of burnout. The high correlation between a lack of peer support systems and burnout was a key finding in the research study.

Precursors to Burnout

Burnout for most teachers is inevitable. Premature burnout due to compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress is an issue that teachers on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation deal with often. The concern that burnout causes a teacher to leave the profession due to compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress is certainly viable for teachers who work on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. One of the concerns in determining the rates of burnout for educators on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is why do some teachers decide to stay and others leave? Large numbers of teachers who suffer burnout do decide to stay in the profession (Hughes, 2001). Precursors to burnout are those things that teachers deal with daily, yet they decide to stay in the profession.

One of the main reasons teachers decide to stay when suffering such emotional strain is because of their love for their students (Minkel, 2016). Teachers choose teaching as a profession simply for the reason that they love kids and want to make a difference. When compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress become an issue with teachers,

the reason they decide to stay in the field is simply because they love the children they teach.

Another reason teachers decide to stay in the field of teaching is they love the collegial system they are a part of (Minkel, 2016). Coming to work and being a part of a team for the betterment of their school keeps teachers from leaving due to burnout. The love of the work is a powerful piece in deciding whether to leave or stay.

For veteran teachers, leaving due to burnout is not an option in some cases simply because of financial reasons. Those teachers who have worked up the ladder in a district will be forced to stay simply because the salary and benefits they have built up will decrease if they decide to find employment at another school. Unfortunately, most veteran teachers are forced to stay and deal with compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout because they cannot afford to leave. Although veteran teachers are not a focus group for this research project, the critical outcome in this research study in deterring compassion fatigue and developing employee wellness programs must be addressed in order to help the veteran teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district.

Causes of Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Teacher burnout is a condition that develops over time due to several factors. These factors for teacher burnout can be either personal or environmental (Pietarien et al., 2013). The following are some of those factors that are critical to the development of teacher burnout and are red-flags for teachers who are at risk for developing burnout.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Dr. Vincent Felitti (2004) states in his study The Origins of Addiction: Evidence from the Adverse Childhood Experiences:

> Adverse childhood experiences are difficult issues, made more so because they strike close to home for many of us. Taking them on will create an ordeal of change but will also provide for many the opportunity to have a better life.

The Origins of Addiction: Evidence from the Adverse Childhood Experiences was a study conducted in the late 1990s by the Centers for Disease Control, the Kaiser Permanente Group, and Dr. Vincent Felitti that focused on the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACES). Adverse childhood experiences are those traumatic experiences that are experienced while growing up (Howard et al., 2015). The study was conducted on 17,000 white, middle-class adults. The study asked each participant if they had experienced any of the following 10 ACES: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, violent treatment of mother, substance abuse in the home, mental illness of family member, parents divorced or separated, family member incarcerated, emotional neglect, physical neglect (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2019). In this study, over half of the participants had reported they had experienced at least one adverse

childhood experience. These traumatic childhood experiences can have lasting emotional effects.

Children who suffer from ACES will often have risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential, and early death (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). With children living in poverty, the rates of child abuse and neglect are five times higher than those children living in higher socio-economic status.

Adverse childhood experiences are a valuable component of this research study on compassion fatigue for teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Teachers currently employed it this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district who have had previous ACES are prone to develop compassion fatigue and have issues with employment.

Students who are currently suffering from any combination of the 10 ACES will bring those traumatic events into the classroom. Avoiding ACES for children who live in high-poverty areas like this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is difficult. Teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school will deal with their own ACES and possibly the ACES that their students are dealing with. Felitti (2004) recommended building resiliency in both children and adults that are being affected by ACES.

Personal Trauma History

A recent study by Abraham-Cook (2012) determined that “traumatic events are at an increased risk of developing secondary traumatic stress reactions, as their unresolved conflicts may be triggered by the traumatic experiences of others” (p. 29). Teachers who bring their own traumatic experiences into the classroom are at a higher risk for

compassion fatigue and burnout. More importantly, teachers who have unresolved trauma and have not dealt with it are very susceptible to burning out in their profession (Mathieau, 2007). Educators need to understand that previous and unresolved trauma can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout.

Another recent study of 166 child welfare workers who had a history of sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect were at greater risk for compassion fatigue compared to their co-workers who had no trauma history (Abraham-Cook, 2012). This study helps to solidify that teachers who have unresolved trauma or a history of trauma are certainly more susceptible to compassion fatigue and burnout.

Traumatic Recollections

Those educators who have experienced previous trauma will often have traumatic recollections that will trigger compassion fatigue and compassion stress (Abraham-Cook, 2012). Traumatic recollections are very similar to flashbacks experienced by those who have been exposed to trauma. Prolonged exposure in working with those who have trauma will often cause traumatic recollections (Carlier et al., 2000). Traumatic recollections are a hindrance to job performance simply because the continual reoccurrence of previous trauma can lead to compassion fatigue. Those who have previous trauma histories need to be careful that their trauma recollections aren't a significant deterrent to their job performance.

The danger with traumatic recollections for educators is the more exposure to students with trauma the more likely it will trigger a traumatic recollection (Trippany et al., 2004). Too often traumatic recollections go unnoticed simply because the educator

has developed a deep sense of empathy for the students they are educating. This sense of empathy will often result in the educator putting their own emotions at risk. It is imperative to avoid triggering these traumatic recollections simply for the concern of empathy and burnout. In some cases, traumatic recollections are too profound and educators will suffer burnout and must leave the profession.

Historical Trauma

Teachers who currently work on a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation could have an accumulation of historical trauma that only compounds the concern for high rates of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. Historical trauma "is the cumulative, multigenerational, collective experience of emotional and psychological injury in communities and decedents" (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, 2018, p. 1). At the core of historical trauma for Native Americans are those previous events that have caused Native American populations to suffer significantly from a loss of culture and identity (Gone et al., 2013). The major disruption in Native American culture begins with colonization and continues today (Gone et al., 2013). The argument that Native Americans are born prone to trauma simply because their ancestors have experienced historical trauma can be made. Brave Heart (2003) found that Native American historical trauma is often associated with depression, suicide, anxiety, self-destructiveness, problems regulating emotions, and low-self-esteem.

In determining rates of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout rural, for teachers on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations, the concern for individual historical trauma must be explored. Those teachers who are Native American

could certainly be prone to trauma before they step into the classroom. This idea of cross-culture and historical trauma (Brave Heart, 2003) is a concern that this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district must acknowledge and discuss. Teachers of Native American descent who currently work on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations are prone to historical trauma which most certainly would make them more susceptible to compassion fatigue. The significance of historical trauma on current educators who work in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools is the possibility of having trauma associated conditions without being exposed to trauma.

The continuance of historical trauma and historical grief for Native Americans certainly will not commence any time soon (Brave Heart, 2003). Having perspective teachers who are born and raised on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations who are predisposed to historical trauma is a concern for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. An emphasis on the probability that historical trauma along with primary and secondary trauma could have on compassion fatigue and burnout for teachers of Native American descent in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation will continue to be an issue.

Teacher Workload

Classroom size is always a concern when trying to keep the rates of burnout down. Montana mandates that classroom sizes are to be no larger than 20 students for most classes (Montana Secretary of State, 2018). One key reason behind trying to keep class sizes small is to avoid teacher burnout. Classrooms that have a high number of

students and a high teacher-student ratio can at times be unmanageable and emotionally draining.

Even in the best of circumstances, high classroom sizes simply are not a best practice. A recent study in Minnesota on class sizes for elementary teachers found that increased class sizes for grades 3 and 5 decreased student test scores (Choi & Lee, 2017. The study looked at student test results from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment from 1997–2005. The summary statistics suggested that by reducing class size in Minnesota by 10, students can have a statistical benefit on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment. The study also found that with lower classroom sizes teachers felt more comfortable dealing with disruptive students.

Classroom size can also lead to safety issues which put more emotional strain on the teacher. The thought of a major incident happening in the classroom can result in the fear of doing the job. This fear of something happening due to too many students is often a reality when classrooms get overcrowded and tensions run high. The results are teachers who feel an emotional strain and are susceptible to burnout (Wood & McCarthy, 2002).

Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy or the lack of it can be a significant determining factor leading to burnout (Malinen, & Savolainen, 2016). Self-efficacy is the teacher's own belief that they can do the job and be effective at it. Self-efficacy is also grounded in the belief that the desired student outcomes are reachable by the teacher (Geerlings et al., 2018). Two of the main outcomes with teacher self-efficacy are instruction and student discipline. If teachers lack the feeling of self-efficacy in regards to instructing their students, the result is lower self-

efficacy and could result in burnout. More importantly, if a teacher feels a lack of self-efficacy in disciplining their students, then burnout is a possibility. Teacher self-efficacy and self-confidence are similar but are not the same construct and should not be defined as such.

A recent study on self-efficacy exemplifies the situation at this Northern Plains Indian Reservation. The study focused on 292 minority/majority students in the Netherlands. In this study, teachers were examined to determine their differences in self-efficacy between minority and majority students. Students were identified by two traits: their ethnicity and whether they were deemed a behavior problem (Geerlings et al., 2018). Of the 292 students surveyed, 112 were native to the Netherlands and 180 were not. The 180 students who were not native to the Netherlands were from Turkey, Morocco, and Eastern Europe.

School climate also plays a major role in teacher self-efficacy. The school climate is the overall feeling that teachers have in regards to safety and security at their school. If a teacher feels safe at school, they are more likely to have higher self-efficacy. When procedural safeguards procedures/anti deterrents such as cameras, schoolwide discipline plans, and positive relationships are evident teachers are more likely to feel comfortable in their ability to do the job (Bosworth et al., 2011). Without procedural safeguards to improve and maintain a positive school climate, teachers will feel that their ability to do the job is hindered, which leads to lower self-efficacy and a higher possibility of burnout.

Lack of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is that inner voice that continually reminds teachers that they are not only doing a good job, but they are also capable of doing a good job (Martin-Cuellar et al., 2018). This inner voice is a powerful tool that can help a teacher fend off burnout. A lack of mindfulness creates a situation where the teacher will believe they don't have the capability to be successful in their position.

A good example of just how powerful mindfulness can be is the Cultivating Awareness and Resistance for Educators (CARE) program. The CARE program is built on the premise of calming the body to help better regulate your emotions (Kamenetz, 2016). A recent study by the Garrison Institute and the CARE program was conducted on 224 high-poverty teachers in New York City in order to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness on teachers. Those teachers who completed the five-week CARE course "reported that their anxiety, depression, feelings of burnout, being rushed and perceived stress all went down compared with a control group" (Kamenetz, 2016, p. 3). The study determined that mindfulness or a lack of it can contribute to compassion fatigue and burnout.

Mindfulness has proven to be a powerful emotional regulating tool. For those teachers who work with high-poverty students on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation, the lack of mindfulness could contribute to compassion fatigue and burnout.

Mandatory Reporting

A severe emotional consequence of working with traumatized children that also contributes to teacher burnout is mandatory reporting for suspected abuse and neglect.

For those teachers who work in this Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district, mandatory reporting and neglect can be a difficult aspect of their job. As one educator stated:

> Although I realize that a child abuse report is not an accusation, I really hated to be the one to do it. What if the parents become angry with me? What if they pull their child out of my classroom? What if they see me as a troublemaker? I also wonder if I would be in any personal danger. Some of the abuse seems awfully violent. Will the parents come after me? (Crosson-Tower, 2003, p. 3)

This Northern Plains Indian Reservation is not immune from retaliation from parents after a teacher has reported suspected abuse and neglect. This type of fear only adds to the development of teacher burnout.

To increase the complexity of suspected abuse and neglect is The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, which demands that any educator working with children who receive federal funds needs to report the suspected abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities (Crosson-Tower, 2003). Inevitably, due to The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act, the likelihood that teachers on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation encounter a student who has been abused and neglected will happen, and a social services report must be made. Having to deal with such highly emotional issues and living in fear of retaliation from parents once social service referrals are made only helps to foster teacher burnout.

School Climate and School Safety

A positive school climate can encompass an array of factors that contribute to compassion fatigue: student-teacher interactions, safety policies and procedures, and proactive strategies to improve student discipline. Peer to peer fights, bullying, assaults,

harassment, and shootings happen often in school. (Lester, 2014). Creating positive school climates that foster morale and allow teachers to focus on educating students helps to deter compassion fatigue (Ollison, 2019).

School safety can also be a contributing factor to compassion fatigue (Bosworth et al., 2011). As teachers enter the work environment, there are several safety features that schools can employ to increase compassion satisfaction and reduce compassion fatigue. Security cameras provide a heightened sense of safety for both students and staff. A positive school environment with fewer fights, graffiti, and violence also helps to deter compassion fatigue and promote compassion satisfaction. Schools should be safe havens for teachers (Ollison, 2019) with a work environment where safety is first. Compassion fatigue is only fostered in an environment where school safety is not a priority.

Student Discipline

One critical piece of this research study on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is the effect that traumatized students and student discipline might have on the development of compassion fatigue for educators in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The connection between traumatized students with higher rates of discipline and compassion fatigue is a concern for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

A recent report by Garcia & Weiss (2019) focused on the impact that student discipline had on teachers who teach in higher poverty areas. One critical key finding in the report states that:

> Tough school climates definitely play a role in the teacher shortage. Despite their substantial training and ability to deal with the challenges of their job,

> the negative aspects of the school climate can dissuade young people from becoming teachers and driving some teachers out of our classrooms. (Garcia & Weiss, 2019, p. 10)

The report found that teacher-shortages do exist in higher levels in schools that are located in high-poverty areas similar to this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. The report by Garcia & Weiss found that 21.8% of teachers surveyed have been threatened and 12.4% of teachers in the report have been physically abused (2019).

Positive/negative school climates are often steered by a student's motivation to learn and a student's motivation to accept the behavior expectations that a school demands (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). School environments need to be manageable in order for the expectation of learning to thrive. Gaging performance for a teacher often begins with their ability to maintain a classroom for all students. As Depalma et al., (2011) state: "A good student has to be well behaved" (p. 80). The standard of being a well-behaved student puts an enormous amount of expectations not only on the students but also the teacher. Well-managed classrooms are a staple of teachers who are demonstrating the ability to offer their students the best education possible. Too often these expectations put forth on the teacher by the school district for student discipline get complicated when the students they are serving are dominantly from homes with vast amounts of trauma.

The heart of all schools is instructional time. Dealing with continual discipline issues will often lead to a loss of instructional time (Gregory & Roberts, 2017). A major concern of this research study is whether students with trauma and discipline issues are such a distraction in the classroom that the loss of instructional time could result in

frustration from the teacher. This type of frustration often leads to the onset of compassion fatigue and apathy begins to set in on the educator (Smith, 2013).

The concern that students with trauma having more discipline issues that they bring to the classroom needs to be addressed. It is understood that well-managed classrooms are a must in regards to teacher performance, but the concern could shift from students who need a well-managed classroom to a teacher who needs emotional support simply because they are entering the compassion fatigue zone.

Continual Grieving/Trauma

A recent study by Cox et al., (2015) on college students found that the possibility of chronic mourning can affect the ability of a student to be successful academically and behaviorally. The significance of this study in relation to students with vast amounts of trauma demonstrated that prolonged grieving compounded by continual trauma can cause students to become depressed with higher anxiety and be difficult to deal with in the classroom setting (Cox et al., 2015). Students with such highly emotional issues could possibly never recover emotionally simply because their trauma is compounded by continual traumatic events that never end. In order for trauma to heal, it needs to stop, but for many students on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation, trauma never ends. Deaths are often followed by more deaths, suicides, domestic abuse, self-harm, and so on. Recovering from one traumatic event before the next even happens often doesn't happen for students on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

Lack of Employee Assistance Programs

An employee assistance program can range from support groups to a recommendation for in-patient treatment. Teachers on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations suffer from an array of issues that might result in a recommendation for employee assistance. Examples of situations where employee assistance could be offered are drug and alcohol abuse and depression. As with all employee assistance the goal is to get the employee help in the hopes they can return and function at work. Unfortunately, teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district who develop compassion fatigue have little employee assistance in trying to curb compassion fatigue before burnout develops.

The key to any employee assistance program is early intervention. Too often early intervention for compassion fatigue goes undetected and burnout will often be the result. Self-care is often overlooked simply because the job of educating students takes precedent (Pfiferling & Gilley, 2000). Secondary trauma is expected when working with children in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. A lack of intervention and employee assistance programs for compassion fatigue should be of major concern for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School.

Teacher Retention Concerns

The single most important piece in educating a child in a school setting is the teacher in the classroom. As Klein (2014) states:

> Nothing matters more to a child in the classroom than his or her teacher. We have all encountered both exemplary and awful teachers, and our common experience tells us that a great teacher can rescue a child from a life of struggle (p. 2).

This Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district has seen an average turnover rate of 21% for the past three years. On a staff of 90 educators, that turnover rate is quite alarming. Unfortunately, exit interviews are not conducted on those teachers who leave this Northern Rockies Indian school district. Of the 21% of those who leave, only 2% have retired. A concern with this research study is the effect that compassion fatigue has on the turnover rate and can some sort of preventative measures and strategies be put into place to help (Douglas, 2010).

High-poverty areas like this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation find it difficult to recruit and retain teachers (Hotchkiss & Enz, 2010). The possibility that the school system is broke in regards to meeting the emotional needs of teachers needs to be researched in order to decrease the rate of teacher turnover.

Lack of Peer Support Systems

In a recent study of special education and compassion fatigue, it was found that a lack of peer support systems within the schools could have adverse effects on teachers (Davis & Palladino, 2011). Whether the district provides a mentor or a teacher-helper the research demonstrated that without a peer support system the prevalence of compassion fatigue is much higher. Peer support systems are one area that this Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district needs to examine further simply because it is the one area that schools control exclusively. Peer systems can be a very powerful tool if implemented properly by school districts.

Relationship between Compassion Satisfaction and Burnout

This research study is being conducted on a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation has at the core the question of how compassion fatigue and burnout are affecting turnover rates for their teachers. Further, the perceived lack of employee assistance programs might be keeping the highest level of educators who are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress from receiving the help they need in order to prevent burnout. The study conducted by Sacco et al. (2015) found the longer educators are employed the more likely they are to handle the situations they are dealing with and keep job satisfaction high. The key construct and the missing link in the research is the effect that student trauma is having on educators in a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation and whether years of experience is also a finding that helps prevent burnout. Further, if an educator is suffering premature compassion fatigue and burnout is setting in less than five years, then the outcome will be higher teacher turnover. Compassion satisfaction is directly linked to burnout in terms of years of experience for critical care nurses, yet the question remains as to whether it holds true for educators on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

There continues to be a debate as to whether compassion fatigue directly affects burnout. Compassion fatigue results directly from working with traumatized individuals. Compassion fatigue can develop quickly whereas burnout takes years to develop. A recent study determined that “burnout does not appear to capture the effects of trauma as an occupational stressor” (Cetrana, et al., 2017, p. 17). This study was conducted on 416 mental health professionals using the ProQOL Survey. The study also determined that compassion fatigue was counterbalanced by compassion satisfaction and they worked

hand-in-hand. It was determined by the study that compassion fatigue is directly related to secondary trauma and that the following are factors that directly relate to both: age, education level, marital status, previous exposure to trauma, ability to cope, workload, job experience, in-service trainings, and work factors (Cetrano et al., 2017). The study emphasized that little research exists in regards to examining all three constructs: compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, and burnout. Rather most research studies will focus on comparing two at a time. The debate remains as to whether compassion fatigue directly links to burnout or if it is just a factor in it. The overall result in this research study found that the more work environmental factors the mental workers dealt with on a daily basis the higher rates of compassion fatigue and burnout which results in lower compassion satisfaction (Cetrano, et al., 2017)

For teachers working in this school district, the connection between compassion satisfaction and burnout lies somewhere in the midst of student trauma and personal trauma. The compounded issue for this school district is the amount of dedication and perseverance their educators must bring to the work environment in order to sufficiently educate their students. Excessive dedication and perfectionism are all key components that eventually can lead to burnout. (Sizemore, 2016). As the reality of the lives of the students they serve in this Northern school district begin to set in, the result is an emotional roller coaster that can be not only be demanding but also career threatening and changing. Compassion satisfaction for these educators often does not develop and mental exhaustion sets in and burnout happens (Sizemore, 2016). Recent studies have determined that compassion satisfaction is a factor in preventing burnout and this

research study on a Northern Plains Indian Reservation will determine what effect, if any, student trauma has on compassion satisfaction and burnout.

Teacher Performance Motivation Theory

This Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district like all rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools is built on the premise of relationships. There are teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, and community-school relationships. The ability to deal with these relationships on a daily basis is a key concept in keeping compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress at bay. The teacher performance motivation theory is grounded in the idea that teachers must understand the needs of their students and apply their effort in order for the students to achieve a possible desired outcome (Koenig & Specht, 2017). The ability to meet the student's needs is compounded emotionally by resources available and the drive to feel intrinsically satisfied.

Teacher performance motivation theory is rooted in the idea that if a teacher feels they cannot meet the needs of the students they serve then compassion fatigue and burnout are a possibility. The ability to cope with the job demands is relinquished and the motivation to educate students takes a back seat. These teachers who are working with children in this school district will encounter several situations where they lack the ability to meet the emotional and academic needs of their students. The result could be a lack of motivation, which according to the teacher performance motivation theory ends with burnout. Having students who are suffering immense amounts of trauma themselves like these children on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation makes it nearly impossible to

meet their needs. It is important that this school district enhance their professional development and help their teachers develop coping skills (Koenig, 2014). The basis for teacher performance motivation theory is if the teacher feels they can meet the needs of their students then the teacher will feel a better sense of self-confidence in meeting their needs. Children who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation deal with abuse, neglect, and trauma on a daily basis, and meeting their social, emotional, and physical needs is impossible. The teacher performance motivation theory demands that the positive outweigh the negative to avoid compassion fatigue and burnout. School districts need to foster growth for all educators in order for the motivation to continue to do the job.

Development of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Compassion Satisfaction

It takes immense time, energy, and effort to provide emotional support to those who need it most (Abraham-Cook, 2012). Whether employed as an educator or health professional, having the ability to detach your emotions from your job and leave the emotions at work is difficult. Too often the caretakers become the victims and will get burned out or develop compassion fatigue due to dealing with high rates of trauma clients.

The ability to detach your emotions from those you are trying to help can lead to compassion satisfaction. Conversely not having the ability to detach your emotions from those you are helping could lead to compassion fatigue. It is possible that a high rate of compassion fatigue could result in a low rate of compassion satisfaction but not

exclusively (Abraham-Cook, 2012). The goal for caretakers remains to keep compassion fatigue at a minimum and increase compassion satisfaction.

The key concept on how compassion fatigue, burnout, and compassion fatigue affect each other all lead to one key point: recognizing and dealing with the effects is critical. The goal is compassion satisfaction, yet there are barriers to achieving it. Bottling up emotions and trying to deal with them internally can lead to emotional burnout and compassion fatigue (Smith, 2013). Compassion fatigue should be considered an emotional disability that can have severe emotional consequences. Self-diagnosing can sometimes be difficult. Most organizations do not utilize any diagnostic tool to determine if their employees are at risk of developing compassion fatigue.

The Co-Existence of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion fatigue is derived from two basic elements: secondary trauma and job burnout (Adams et al., 2008). Compassion fatigue is an obvious condition that leads to high employee turnover. Compassion satisfaction is the feeling that the job being performed is meeting expectations and it leads to lower turnover. The possibility that compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction co-existing as one condition has been debated. The idea that compassion satisfaction and helping others has its consequences in compassion fatigue is certainly an issue. Too often our hearts go out to those we help but yet our hearts can only take so much (Radey & Figley, 2007). Being in a complete state of compassion satisfaction can have could certainly have consequences also.

A key concept in whether compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction co-exist is the idea that a caretaker must welcome the negative feelings that come with caretaking (Radey & Figley, 2007). In order to predict the consequences of compassion satisfaction, the caretaker must feel compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. Without predicting compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction, it is difficult to flourish emotionally in the employee environment. Most importantly, in order to have self-awareness, a caretaker must feel and understand what compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction feel like to avoid burnout and leave the job. An argument can be made that too much compassion satisfaction is not necessarily a condition that is healthy for caretakers either.

Primary, Historical, and Intergenerational Trauma: A Study on Montana's "Helpers"

A recent study at Montana State University sheds light on how Montana's workplace deals with compassion fatigue. The Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity at Montana State University did a study on how trauma affects those in "helping professions." Over 100 interviews were conducted by Dr. Kelly Knight and Dr. Colter Ellis on those in the "helping professions" in Montana, and a distinct trend developed: Providing services to victims who are traumatized takes an emotional toll on the 'helpers' (Montana State University, 2014). The study by Knight and Kelly evolved into the following research question: How can we improve victim services in Montana by first recognizing and then addressing the toll this work takes on providers themselves?

The study focused on three types of trauma: primary, historical, and intergenerational. Examples of primary trauma are early childhood trauma, domestic violence, sexual violence, physical and gun violence, community violence, and traumatic grief. Historical and intergenerational trauma is relevant for those educators who work in this school district. As one scholar stated about Native Americans and historical trauma:

> Traumatic experiences are cumulative. If one generation does not heal, problems are transmitted to subsequent generations. In some form, this cultural trauma affects every Native person. It sculpts how we think, how we respond emotionally. It affects our social dynamics and, at the deepest level, impacts our spirituality. Intergenerational trauma has wounded us deeply (Montana State University, 2014, p.11)

The study by Montana State University found that historical and intergenerational trauma thrives on Montana's Indian Reservations. Poverty, drug addiction, violence, and suicide are all contributing factors to historical and intergenerational trauma. Historical and intergenerational trauma can fester in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations similar to this Northern Plains Indian Reservation.

A key finding was in this study by Montana State University (2014) found that if the "helper" had a personal history of trauma, they were more likely to work with traumatized clients. Whether their personal histories included abuse, neglect, addiction, or violence, the theme that emerged from the research is that "helpers" who have a deep history of trauma are likely to find professions where they work with those who are traumatized.

A consequence of this Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district is that historical trauma can thrive in the students and classrooms. Teachers of Native American descent who currently teach in this school district carry historical and intergenerational

trauma. Students of Native American descent who currently attend school at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district also carry historical and intergenerational trauma. The concern for this research study on this school district is how historical and intergenerational trauma combined with personal trauma can result in teachers developing compassion fatigue.

Subject Material and Compassion Fatigue

In a recent study by Zartner (2019), the determination was made that the content material being taught can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout. It is often that subjects being taught have a high emotional impact and thus it is difficult to teach. One such event occurred on December 26, 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln received word that 38 Dakota Sioux were hanged in Mankato, Minnesota as a result of the Great Sioux Uprising (Totally History, 2012). Teaching about the Great Sioux Uprising has a major emotional impact especially for those students and staff who work on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. More so, those students and staff who associate themselves as Sioux find it even more difficult.

The emotional impact of teaching about a tragic event like the Dakota Sioux hangings can be very depressing and often the amount of emotion attached cannot be underestimated (Zartner, 2019). It is quite possible that continually teaching such emotional topics can lead to an absence of compassion for the educator and thus compassion fatigue can be an issue. Compassion fatigue and burnout is most certainly an issue when educators who are teaching on Indian Reservations cover content that is relative to the area and students they teach.

An argument as to how classroom material leads to a feeling of numbness can most certainly be made especially when working with students on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. History books often cover the negative events that Native Americans have gone through, and continually teaching and focusing on the negative can lead to less empathy, which could lead to compassion fatigue. Although the material being taught is often mandatory, there are teaching strategies that can help the teacher and students deter the high emotional impact. It is important the teacher understand that there is strong emotion attached to material and classrooms can turn negative due to the material.

Another key data point in higher levels of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout among educators is a lack of an employee assistance program offered by the school district. A lack of an early warning system and interventions (Mathieau, 2013) for educators to determine compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout is non-existent in most schools. It is rare for schools to promote early warning systems for mental health concerns simply for the lack of awareness and resources. An early warning system could include tools such as the ProQOL survey and public awareness about the possibility of developing compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout (Mathieau, 2013). Educators are often left to handle these issues of compassion fatigue and burnout by themselves.

Poverty, Indian Reservations, and Compassion Fatigue

Teachers are similar to firefighters, police officers, and social service workers in that their jobs can be very stressful (Koenig et al., 2017). Teaching has a number of

dynamics that cause stress. Student behavior, academic failure and success, time constraints, and relationships with parents and co-workers are all examples of stressors in teaching (Koenig et al., 2017). Students who live on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations are more susceptible to bring these stressors into the academic stressors. Teaching on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations can certainly have its challenges with students who bring these stressors into the learning environment.

A recent study on Montana's Indian Reservations helps to solidify the argument that rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations have immense social issues that often will be brought into the classroom. A 2016 study on Montana's Indian Reservations determined that there were more than 550 sexual assault/assault cases declined by federal officials due to insufficient evidence (Hudetz, 2018). Limited investigations are often too common and the perpetrator(s) will often never get prosecuted. Murders are at times classified as suicides. Sex trafficking due to meth addiction is also common on Montana's Indian Reservations. Meth-addicted moms are often selling their daughters to drug dealers in exchange for meth (Wulfhorst, 2016). The Fort Peck Indian Reservation located in Montana found that meth accounts for about 40% of the crime. In one month, there were six newborns born who were addicted to meth. Too often reports to local service agencies are not made simply because of the fear of nothing being done.

These societal issues experienced on Montana's Indian Reservations can be echoed throughout many rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. Unfortunately, there exists the inevitability that this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district and teachers will feel the effect of these societal issues in the classroom. Teachers who work

with Native American children in this school district will deal directly or indirectly with students who have been affected by drugs, abuse, and other significant emotional issues.

Poverty and crime on this Northern Rockies Plains Indian Reservation are societal issues that are continual and immense. Those who are teaching in this school district most certainly understand that the events and circumstances their students have encountered are a major force behind their academic and social issues. Most of the students these teachers deal with daily have been exposed to violence or have been victims themselves. The emotional impact on the educator can be devastating with obvious compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, and burnout concerns. Teaching in such poverty areas with such high rates of crime and abuse will have plenty of emotion attached.

Secondary trauma begins with students who continually bring trauma to the classroom (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). Compassion fatigue begins when the teacher is continually dealing with students who have been traumatized. The connection between crime on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation and teachers who develop compassion fatigue and burnout due to students who bring ample amounts of trauma into the classroom is certainly of concern to rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts.

Other Indian Reservation Community Factors Influencing Student Behavior

In determining the rates of compassion fatigue for rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation teachers are other factors that students encounter daily in their community

and homes. Federal, State, and Tribal Government subsistence programs for high-poverty areas like this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation are often utilized by families.

One such program that students who attend this school district is the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). Formerly known as food stamps, this program provides assistance for many high-poverty homes if the income level is met. A recent study conducted by Munger et al., (2017) on mothers who utilized the SNAP program found that the relationship between food security and depression was not only a viable condition but it could also lead to domestic abuse. The study was a secondary analysis of the data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. One key finding of the study found that:

> Families with limited means experience substantial stress as they work to make ends meet. This economic pressure is compounded by other stressful life events prevalent for poor families, which create feelings of psychological distress, including depression (Munger et al., 2017, p. 148).

The key finding in this study by Muger et al., (2017) is that students who live in homes with government subsidy programs such as SNAP could possibly have been exposed to traumatic events in their homes. Children who attend this school district live in homes where SNAP benefits are utilized which could contribute negatively to their emotional well-being.

There are other factors that students encounter daily in their communities that contribute to their overall emotional health. Unemployment and federal and state government subsistence are obvious societal issues that all rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations deal with. The emotional effect that unemployment and state and

government subsidies have on children who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is one that connects with student trauma.

Case Study: Montana's Indian Reservations

This research study is focused on compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout for educators located on a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. It is the focus of this research study to make the case that high rates of poverty and unemployment are contributing factors in students being traumatized. The following a case study on Montana's Indian Reservations and the high rates of unemployment and poverty these Indian Reservations have. The argument that high-poverty and unemployment contribute to students being traumatized can be made simply based upon the despair that some of these students live in especially on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

Montana has seven federally recognized Indian Reservations: Blackfeet, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy, and Salish-Kootenai. Montana's Indian Reservations can have very complex legal systems controlled by federal, state, local, and Tribal laws. Public education on each Montana Indian Reservation is controlled by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Montana's public Reservation Schools' accreditation and policies are governed by the Montana OPI. In a recent publication by the Montana Department of Labor (2015), employment rates for Montana Indian Reservations are as follows:

Table 1

Employment/Unemployment Rates for Montana's Indian Reservations

Montana Reservation	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Blackfeet	51.2	48.8

Crow	43.6	56.4
Fort Belknap	36.3	63.7
Fort Peck	50.7	49.3
Northern Cheyenne	43.5	46.5
Rocky Boy	46.7	53.3
Salish-Kootenai	50.1	49.9

In a recent study on suicide rates of men by Tartaro & Lester (2015), it was determined that marriage rates, birth rates, divorce rates, and unemployment rates were all found to be contributing factors. Being employed and having a job allows children to live in homes not only where they are socially respected but where they also have personal respect (Wisman & Pacitti, 2014). It is well known that areas with high unemployment rates like Montana's Indian Reservations often have schools that need improvement and have high rates of social dysfunction (Wisman & Aaron, 2014).

The connection between high unemployment and trauma with this school districts' students is the fact that those houses where neither parent/guardian works are filled with hopelessness and despair. Too often these homes are overloaded with relatives who also are unemployed and are often places where drinking and abuse are a daily occurrence. Working provides a sense of pride in the ability to pay bills and provide for the family unit. As Wisman and Aaron stated (2014), the strongest determinant of low life satisfaction is the absence of social connection, particularly unemployment and separation (p. 6). Having a job and working provides a sense of satisfaction that only benefits the family and those who are living in it.

The cycle of unemployment for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation ties directly to the availability of federal, state, and Tribal assistance programs. There is very

little empathy for those families who need to live off assistance programs in order to survive (Wagaman et al., 2018). Children who reside on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation live in families where public assistance programs are the norm. Too often those families who live off public assistance programs will have a sense of shame, which ultimately can result in the household being in emotional turmoil. The result is children witnessing drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and domestic abuse. Witnessing this type of abuse only leads to students being traumatized and thus bringing their trauma to school.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the primary federal government assistance program that families living in poverty will benefit from. TANF is a federal program that is income-based and that many families who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation utilize. The TANF program is used by families in poverty to purchase food and pay their house bills (Heflin, & Acevedo, 2011).

A recent study on TANF participants detailed the effects that TANF and welfare have on the cognitive ability of children on TANF. The research study conducted by Heflin and Acevedo (2011) used the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) to test language skills in children 0–5. The study focused on children who lived in homes where TANF was the norm. The study followed a cohort of 4898 children between 1998 and 2000 that lived in cities with a population greater than 200,000. The study found that children who continually lived in homes where TANF was the main source of income and where unemployment the norm have lower scores on the PPVT than those children who did not. The study affirmed that children who live in homes where government assistance is the norm will often suffer from a lack of kindergarten readiness. Children

who enter kindergarten ready to learn are much more likely to have success throughout their academic career (Peterson et al., 2018). Further, children who enter kindergarten ready to learn will be more emotionally stable and more able to handle all the anxiety that school can bring.

The study by Heflin and Acevedo (2011) helps to reaffirm that when children live in homes where government assistance is the norm they will often enter kindergarten lacking the basic emotional and academic skills in order to be successful. The connection for this research study is that children from high-poverty households like those on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation will often end up in classrooms where the teacher is suffering from compassion fatigue and burnout. The result is the teacher will no longer have the effort and energy to completer the job duties and they will find employment elsewhere.

Social programs such as TANF often may have "unintended negative outcomes" (Heflin & Acevedo, 2011, p. 638). Tying unemployment and government assistance to students who enter kindergarten lacking academic and social skills is an issue that is only compounded by issues that these students encounter in the home. The possibility that a student whose parents are unemployed and use government assistance programs is suffering from emotional issues and bringing those to the classroom is possible.

Students who live in poverty are the highest risk for a lack of kindergarten readiness (Peterson, et al., 2018). Children on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservations are four times more likely (State of Montana, 2018) to live in homes where government assistance is utilized, which in turn puts them at a higher risk for not having kindergarten

readiness. Too often these students will live in homes where the risk of abuse and neglect is more possible. This continual exposure to trauma for these children fosters trauma which in turn deters their readiness for school. Children need to be raised in homes that are fostered by love and caring not by the emotional rollercoaster of neglect and abuse. Direct trauma only results in an array of issues that eventually will make it into the classroom.

Possible Treatments of Compassion Fatigue

Recognizing that compassion fatigue is an issue (Mathieau, 2007) is the first step in identifying and building support systems. Caring for your students is an obvious result of teaching, and by caring, it is possible that compassion fatigue will develop. Teachers who work with children on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations need to understand that the cost of caring is compassion fatigue (The American Institute of Stress, 2014). More so, school districts on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations need to understand that compassion fatigue exists within their school districts.

In identifying compassion fatigue the ProQOL Scale survey has been proven to help caregivers identify the possibility that they are suffering compassion fatigue (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). The PROqol survey is a 30-question survey that is scaled and helps determine individual compassion fatigue rates. The PROqol survey will help teachers define what level of compassion fatigue they are experiencing.

If high levels of compassion fatigue exist as a result of the ProQOL survey, the following are options that a school district can adopt to help individual teachers who are suffering. It is possible that the teacher needs to take some time away from work to deal

with compassion fatigue (Pfiferling & Gilley, 2000). Other options for compassion fatigue for teachers include support groups, exercise, and understanding that the pain you feel is normal. Furthermore, school districts on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations need to understand that their educators can fall victim to compassion fatigue and develop support systems to deal with compassion fatigue.

Teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district must have an interpersonal concern that they could be susceptible to compassion fatigue. The idea that taking on someone else's suffering rather than worry about your own is a concern that all teachers on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations must have. A recent study examined the strategies that educators use to combat compassion fatigue and one common strategy was to use some sort of reflection activity like yoga or meditation which has shown great success (Walton, 2015). It is important that the focus shift from worrying about other's traumatic experiences to worrying about and treating your own. The idea is that self-care through reflection most certainly is a viable option in building a support system to deter compassion fatigue.

Caring for others is nothing to be taken too lightly. The emotion that is attached to caring for others can be draining. A recent study found that novice nurses who recently have entered the field are experiencing compassion fatigue and burning out and leaving the profession (Kelly et al., 2017). This is a concerning trend that educators who work on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations are also experiencing. The focus on creating an environment that promotes compassion without fatigue is a priority for rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation Schools.

Key components to creating a compassionate environment by elimination of fatigue is to create an environment that is “safe, empowering, and satisfying” (Wahl et al., 2018, p. 231). Further, Wahl et al. (2018) stated that in order to prevent compassion fatigue there must be a "healthy environment; appropriate resources; strong, supportive leadership; nurse engagement and recognition; mutual respect; and a collaborative culture” (p. 232). The foundation for the prevention of compassion fatigue is to have a work environment that is healthy and has strong leaders who support their employees. A concern for this research study in this school district is to what extent leadership is capable of dealing with compassion fatigue and secondary trauma and whether a healthy emotional environment is existent.

A Need for Employee Wellness Programs

Employee wellness programs in schools are often viewed as being punitive with little progression. In order to qualify for employee wellness programs, teachers often have to break local school policy. Most employee wellness programs for educators often are a result of alcohol drug/abuse, divorces, and financial issues. (Cohen & Schwartz, 2002). A recent study of 720 employees in a Canadian school district determined that those employees who do participate in employee wellness programs are often more productive in the organizations that they serve. It is estimated that 10%–12% of employees within organizations have issues that negatively affect them (Csiernk, 1990). The gap in employee wellness programs exists where the need for the program is deterred by the willingness of the employee to participate. The key construct in any employee wellness program is the employee admitting they are having a problem and seeking help.

Another recent report entitled Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces found that 44 percent of employees had experienced some sort of mental health issue (The Conference Board of Canada, 2011). The report also found that only 26% of employees felt that their immediate supervisor had the resources to offer help for mental health issues. Unfortunately, the standard of being able to control your emotions was a trend that also came from the report. Further, the report also found that 44%of employees also felt that the organization was not capable of handling their mental issues even if they sought help. The key finding in this report was that although mental health continues to be an employee issue the offering and accepting of help is the void.

Mental health is one area of employee assistance programs that is often overlooked (Buck et al., 2003). There are several barriers to employee assistance programs, especially with those educators working on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. There is a lot of shame and denial in admitting a mental health issue. It is extremely difficult for educators who are working in this school district to admit they are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. The ability to control your mental health seems to be something that often the standard. Seeking help for mental health issues will bring shame to the employee.

A model employee assistance program for compassion fatigue and secondary stress should provide immense confidentiality. Unfortunately for those employees working in this school district, keeping confidentiality is difficult. Seeking help for such mental health issues is avoided because the employee feels that they will be branded a weak-minded educator, which could result in termination (Uzman & Telef, 2015). This

idea that the weak-minded cannot sufficiently educate children is an attitude that many school organizations and schools have. The key point for employees working at this school district is that welcoming mental health issues is the norm for the school. Attempting to stigmatize mental health must be eliminated in order for the teachers in this school district. The continued fear will be that teachers will continue to suffer from compassion fatigue and secondary stress and eventually burnout.

Model Employee Wellness Programs

For those educators working in this school district, the key step is admitting that you are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. As with any mental health issues, the admission is oftentimes compounded by fear and embarrassment. Attempting to bottle up emotions and deal with the secondary trauma inflicted by students can be debilitating for teachers (Smith, 2013). Compounding the issue is whether the teacher has a personal history of trauma and the result will most certainly be higher rates of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. In order for employees to be productive, they must feel they are supported and confident enough to seek local mental health help (Thomas, 2016).

One key concept explored by Kurzman (2013) was the shifting change in the model of employee assistance programs. Many employee assistance programs were developed on the premise of alcoholism. Alcoholism is considered a progressive disease because over a period of years, the employee will exhibit poor work habits such as being late and missing work. Most employee assistance programs will model their services and programs after alcoholic employee assistance programs (Kurzman, 2013). The concern

for educators suffering high rates of compassion fatigue and secondary trauma is that mental health issues cannot be diagnosed and treated the same as alcoholism in regards to employee assistance programs. Employee assistance for alcoholics is often treated with in-patient treatment with the goal of returning to work.

In order for educators to combat secondary trauma and compassion fatigue, there needs to be an alternative model of the employee assistance program. The “one size fits all” model will not work. One of the key points to a model employee assistance program is a diagnostic tool that is both reliable and user friendly.

Treating compassion fatigue and secondary trauma needs to come less from a medical standpoint and more from of a social standpoint (Kurzman, 2013). In-patient facilities are not a preferred method to treat compassion fatigue and secondary trauma for teachers suffering from them. An early warning system for compassion fatigue and secondary trauma must be implemented (Mathieau, 2013). It is vitally important that schools incorporate an environment where asking for help is the norm.

One alternative model that is highly effective is to mandate that the school district include a yearly in-service strand that is directed towards diagnosing and treating compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. This type of employee assistance model will include workshops and support groups and will include a financial investment from the school district. The message being sent from this type of alternative model of employee assistance is that the school district cares about the emotional well-being of their employees.

Employee Assistance Programs: A Native American Approach

Model employee assistance programs used exclusively for rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations are limited. The Kalispel Tribe of Nations has a program for its employees that emphasizes the enrichment of the whole person. Referred to as the Camas Path Behavioral Health Services, this type of model program could benefit Indian Reservation schools that are experiencing high rates of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The Camas Path Foundation has a mission to "improve the physical, mental, and social wellness of our Tribal and community members" (Kalispel Tribe of Nations, 2019, p. 2). This type of holistic approach that incorporates Native American values and seeks to treat the mind, heart, and soul might help to offset the high levels of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout educators on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations are experiencing. The Camas Path is a confidential program that has very little cost associated with it. Unfortunately, no research can be found regarding this program being used in any public Native American Schools.

The Native Wellness Institute is an organization that is geared towards bringing wellness into all facets of the workplace. The Native Wellness Institute is rooted in the practice of finding a balance between the physical, spiritual, and mental well-being (Native American Wellness Institute, 2019). The approach used by the Native American Wellness Institute is to focus on those behaviors that are causing unhealthy situations at work like compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress and use a Native American approach of healing to help remedy the issue. The Native American Wellness Institute strives to use balance in order to combat mental health issues. One key concept of the Native American Wellness Institute is the recognition that historical trauma is directly

liked to current trauma and in Native American communities. High rates of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, gossip, and poverty are all directly linked to trauma (Native American Wellness Institute, 2019).

Incorporating Native American values into an employee wellness program is something that shows great promise; unfortunately, this school district isn't progressive in implementation of employee wellness programs. One such promising approach has been utilized by the Native American Community Academy located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Native American Community Academy serves Native Americans in Albuquerque and offers a Native American holistic approach to treating mental health for students, parents, and employees. One of the offerings is what is referred to as the Eagle Room. The Eagle Room is a community-based program dedicated to a "Peaceful, culturally based meditation space for all students, families, and staff for self-reflection, meditation, and prayer honoring our Native traditions" (Native American Community Council, 2018, p. 4). The focus of the Eagle Room is to help students and staff who are dealing with worry, stress, trauma, and any other emotional issue. The Eagle Room is open to daily and it is staffed by mental health professionals. The success of the Eagle Room stems from the focus on Native American values and meditation incorporated into it.

In order for this school district to reduce rates of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout, a Native American approach is mandatory. Unfortunately, nothing in this research study can be found that provides a model employee assistance program from a Native American approach. That void in research makes it imperative that this

research study using the ProQOL survey and participant interviews determine rates of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout and develop employee assistance programs from a Native American perspective.

Teacher Preparation Programs

This research project is focused on identifying and building support systems for compassion fatigue for teachers who are currently working in this school district. Teaching in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools similar to this Northern Plains Indian Reservation have common themes and concerns embedded within the school environment: discipline issues. traumatized students, high absenteeism. culture differences. community differences, community and domestic violence, Tribal politics, and many other cultural differences. With teachers in these rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools being prone to compassion fatigue due to cultural and societal differences and preparing them to work in these highly emotional environments should be discussed. Stepping into and teaching in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts can be both rewarding and emotionally demanding resulting in compassion fatigue.

It is rare to find a university teacher preparation program devoted primarily to rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts. A recent study on the Navajo Indian Reservation described the university's role for teacher preparation programs for indigenous schools as: "Throughout most universities and colleges of education, there exists a culture that values colorblindness, equality, and sameness for all, and an extraordinarily slow pace of change" (Castango et al., n.d., p. 66). Teaching in rural,

high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts is more than just academics. Teachers need to be culturally responsive and welcome those societal differences.

The downside to university indigenous teacher preparation programs is they are rare. Most teacher preparation programs simply don't have the resources to devote to indigenous teacher preparation programs (Castango et al., n.d.). The reality of what rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts are is a concern that most graduating teachers are not prepared for. Some of these teachers will accept jobs at schools similar to this school district and have the best intentions, yet the culture shock and emotional trauma will result in compassion fatigue. Preparing teachers to work in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts must be a collaborative effort between universities, school districts, and local communities.

Summary

This research study was focused on student trauma and the effect it has on teachers in this school district. The research study identified the rates of compassion fatigue for teachers in this school district. The research study also sought to find solutions such as employee wellness programs in order to deter the rates of compassion fatigue for teachers in this school district. As Paccione-Dyszlewski (2016) stated:

> Trauma is personal. It does not appear if it not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated, the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams, healing can begin (p. 8)

Students who live on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation feel the effects of trauma on a daily basis. Whether they are experiencing abuse or neglect at home or

whether they are feeling the effects of secondary trauma, the students on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservations deal with trauma daily. It is inevitable that this direct trauma will get brought into the classrooms in this school district.

Understanding that compassion fatigue can be a detriment to a teacher's performance is a critical first step in identifying the condition. The literature demonstrates that rural, high-poverty locations like this school district are fertile ground for compassion fatigue to develop. Further, if a teacher has a vast history of personal trauma, the possibility of developing compassion fatigue is likely. The consequences of not having an effective system for recognizing and treating compassion for teachers in this school district could have adverse effects such as teacher burnout and turnover.

Key in determining the rates of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout is the use of ProQOL diagnostic survey. There exists no research in determining the rates of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout with teachers working on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. The literature demonstrated that the ProQOL diagnostic survey is reliably significant in helping to determine these rates.

A recent study on direct trauma for youth workers determined their higher levels of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout were a result of anticipated trauma (Hopwood & Loi, 2018). Anticipated trauma is those indirect traumatic events that range from simple conversations to first-hand accounts of physical abuse (Hopwood, et. al, 2018). The key with a study on compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and

burnout are to diagnose these anticipated traumatic events and provide early interventions for teachers to address and treat them.

Research studies on compassion fatigue rates for teachers on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations is limited. The most recent study on compassion fatigue for teachers with similar demographics to this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation was conducted primarily on teachers within urban, high-poverty areas. The study found a concrete connection between high compassion fatigue rates among teachers in urban and high-poverty areas using the ProQOL survey (Abraham-Cook, 2012). The result of this study also determined that secondary traumatic stress was a key factor in higher levels of compassion fatigue for teachers working with students in high-poverty, urban areas.

This school district is located in a rural, high-poverty area. Improving the professional quality of life for those teachers who are suffering compassion fatigue remains the central focus for this research study. Allowing teachers in this school district the opportunity to identify personal compassion fatigue and seek support needs to remain a goal for this research study.

Rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations will continue to combat traumatic social issues that children will suffer and bring into school. School districts that deal with these types of students need to admit their teachers are suffering from compassion fatigue and allow for support systems and employee wellness programs to foster.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Methodology

This chapter describes the methods used to determine the level of compassion fatigue for those educators in this Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district. The method used in the research study was an embedded case design using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Although studies exist on compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout for those educators in urban, high populated schools, no studies could be found addressing these topics on educators serving in schools on rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations. The purpose of this research study determined the extent to which compassion fatigue occurred among teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district and explore the perceptions of educators who may be suffering from compassion fatigue.

To provide a focus towards the purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed from the methods:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?
2. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, mental health availability, and organizational commitments to well-being?

3. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

Research Design

The research design for this research study is a case study using an embedded case study. According to Yin (2009), "Embedded case studies are an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). An embedded case design for this research study allowed for a systematic way of collecting the data, analyzing the information collected, and the reporting of the results. The embedded case design for this research study used a quantitative lens embedded within a qualitative research lens. The ProQOL survey determined the initial interview pool. The range of compassion fatigue scores from the ProQOL was delineated from greatest to least. The participants with the higher compassion fatigue scores based on the ProQOL were chosen from the interview pool.

The initial quantitative approach used the ProQOL survey to determine compassion fatigue rates for teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The survey data from the ProQOL survey was used to identify five teachers in this school district who may currently be suffering from compassion fatigue. The quantitative data collected via the ProQOL survey helped lay the foundation for the teacher's perception of how compassion fatigue is affecting their job.

The purpose of choosing a mixed methods research design for this research study ties strictly to the research questions posed for this research study. Using a single

methodological approach would not fully answer the research questions. A quantitative study might indicate the prevalence of compassion fatigue but would not explain how the situation was experienced. A qualitative approach would explain the participants' perceptual experience but would not indicate the prevalence of compassion fatigue. Merging qualitative and quantitative data in the research study allowed for the research questions to be met and thus the goal of the research project fulfilled.

The survey data using the ProQOL helped determine which teachers in this school district were suffering the highest rates of compassion fatigue. Gathering this data quantitatively allowed for the research project to using the ProQOL survey helped to meet the research project's first question: What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the ProQOL survey for teachers at a Northern Plains Indian Reservation school district? The survey data collected allowed for the pool of possible teachers to be selected based upon their compassion fatigue scores as determined by the ProQOL survey. The six teachers selected for the interviews were selected from a pool of 109 teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district who took the ProQOL survey.

The option to select a focus group for this research project was explored. The focus group is a predictable, deliberate selection of research participants which allows the members to interact while keeping the focus of the research project (Devault, 2019). Focus groups, unlike individual interviews, are conducted in a group setting where the research participants build on other emotions and responses. In order to achieve the desired outcome of the research study, a focus group was not chosen as a research tool.

The research design demanded that the interview process drive the qualitative research process simply because the one-to-one setting allows for participants to share their traumatic experiences and true feelings of the school system they are currently employed in this school district. The influence of the other participants (Devault, 2019) was a concern, and therefore, the decision was made not to utilize a focus group in this research study.

Population Demographics

The population of interest for this research study was teachers who are currently employed at this school district. There are currently 109 teachers who are employed at this school. Table 2 describes the basic demographic data for this Northern Rockies Reservation Indian Reservation school district.

Table 2. *Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School Demographic Data*

Demographic	Number	Total Native American
Teachers	109	53
Administration	9	4
Students	964	926
Low-Income Students	964	926
Special Education Students	203	197

(K. Erickson, personal communication, January 4, 2020).

Table 2 demonstrates the demographic data for the number of special education students in this school district. With a total enrollment of 964 students and 203 of them designated to receive special education services, the percentage for special education students at this school district is 21% (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 4,

2020).

Table 3. *Federal Income Eligibility Income Chart: Free and Reduced*

Household Size	Yearly Income	Monthly Income
1	$23,107	$1,926
2	$31,284	$2,607
3	$39,461	$3,289
4	$47,638	$3,970
5	$55,815	$4,652

(State of Montana, 2018)

Table 3 demonstrates the free and reduced numbers for students in this school district. Table 3 demonstrates the federal income guidelines for all public schools for free and reduced. As demonstrated by Table 3, this school district is designated 100% free and reduced. This free and reduced designation results in each student in this school district receiving free breakfast and lunch. This designation of 100% free and reduced is a result of such poverty and low-income numbers for the majority of students in this school district.

Participants

All the sample participants in this research study were chosen based upon the determination that their demographics fit the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?

2. How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being?
3. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

The sample participants met the following characteristics based on the research questions and possible desired outcomes: They had to be current teachers in this school district. The sample pool for participants was determined to be 109 participants based upon the demographic data that they were all current teachers in this school district. There was no limitation for years of experience, race, ethnicity, grade level, gender, or level of college experience. All the participants chosen to do the initial ProQOL had current email addresses and were working in the area of their certification at this school district.

The participants are the heart of any qualitative research study, and caution was taken to protect their identity and reassure them that by participating their vulnerability will be handled ethically and with sensitivity. The participants for this research study all currently work in the same school district, which makes their availability to interviews accessible.

All of the interview participants were sent a demographic questionnaire via email (Appendix A). The demographic questionnaire did not identify any particular participant. The purpose of the demographic questionnaire was to gain more demographic data for

those who were chosen to participate in this research study. The demographic collected included age, gender, race, relationship status, years of experience at a teacher, and education level.

The interview participants selected for this embedded case design were chosen from the highest range in ProQOL scores. A specific number of interview participants was not predetermined. Rather the interview participants with the highest scores on the ProQOL were selected and interviewed until the researcher determined a saturation point had been reached. Saturation in qualitative research is defined as: "A moment during the analysis of the data where the same themes are recurring, and no new insights are given by additional sources of data" (Quirkos, 2016, p. 1). When the participants are interviewed and no new themes are variations have developed, then saturation is reached and the interviews commence.

Data Collection Procedures

This quantitative data analysis merged with qualitative data analysis and gathered the perceptions of teachers who may be suffering from compassion fatigue about their working environment and their work with students. Those teachers who scored the highest on the ProQOL survey for compassion fatigue were interviewed on questions that were developed from the ProQOL survey.

The embedded case study lens for this research study merged from a quantitative view to a qualitative view when the interviews were complete and analyzed. The qualitative data collected from the interviews is an attempt to determine the possible

perceptions that the teachers who scored highest on compassion fatigue scores have on how trauma is affecting their job. The interview questions are as follows:

1. Tell me about a typical day for you as a teacher?
    a. Prompts: Morning, Afternoon, Evening
2. Tell me about the part of your job that gives you the most satisfaction?
    a. Prompts: Working with children, Working with Teachers, Working with Community Members
3. What do you find to be the biggest challenges working at this school?
4. How does working with children who have traumatic experiences affect you?
    a. Prompts: How do you make a difference? Describe the differences you are making? How difficult is it to separate personal and professional life? Has working with traumatized students impacted you?
5. How do you feel the school district helps support you emotionally to deal with students who bring traumatic experiences to school?
    a. Prompts: How might you currently deal with students' traumatic experiences?
6. Describe your feeling towards educational leaders in supporting your concerns about compassion fatigue?
    a. Prompts: Employee Wellness Programs
7. What questions should I be asking about your experiences with children who have experienced high levels of trauma in their lives?

Data Collection

The data collection process for this research project on compassion fatigue was an embedded design research study using the ProQOL Survey and participant interviews. Permission was requested and granted to use the ProQOL survey at www.proqol.com (Appendix B). The ProQOL survey was developed in Survey Monkey and was used to collect quantitative data. The consent form along with the ProQOL survey was delivered electronically to the 109 teachers through email using Survey Monkey. The consent form (Appendix C) reminded participants that the survey was confidential and did not identify individual participants. The consent form also reminded participants of their option to opt out at any time. Participants had a maximum of one week to complete the survey. A follow-up email was sent at the end of the first week to participants as a reminder of the completion.

At the completion of the data collection for the ProQOL survey, the data was exported into SPSS. The range scores for compassion fatigue from top to bottom were determined and formed the interview pool for this research project.

Interviews

The participants were interviewed on location at this school district. The qualitative interviews adhered to the following guidelines: the intent of the research was conveyed, the swaying of the participants was primary, bias was eliminated by the interviewer, mock/practice session was conducted, and post-interview reflection was mandatory (Duke Global Health Institute, 2018). These guidelines were reviewed with

the alternate interviewers. Body language was a very important interview skill that was implemented in order to prevent any swaying of the participants.

The interviewees were offered a consent form (Appendix E) and financial incentive. The interviews will not be conducted by the researcher as to avoid any conflict simply because the researcher supervises all the possible interviewees. The interviews were conducted onsite at this school district.

The interview questions (Appendix D) asked were recorded with permission from the participant. The recordings will be kept under lock and key. The recordings were transcribed and the recordings were erased within 60 days upon completion of the interviews.

Conducting the interviews was completed by two alternative interviewers in order to meet the demands of the validity of the qualitative data. The decision to have alternate interviewers conduct the interviews was made based upon the concern for the primary researcher also being an administrator in this school district.

Each interviewee was offered a consent form before each interview (Appendix E). Each interview was conducted onsite. Each interview was recorded with the knowledge and consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted with the following strict guidelines: The intent was clearly conveyed to participants, bias was eliminated in questioning, and the swaying of interviewees with questioning was eliminated (Duke Global Health Institute, 2018). Each interview was completed on an average of 30 minutes. Each of the six interviewees was given a financial incentive for their time and participation.

After the interviews were completed by the alternate interviewer(s), the recordings were manually transcribed by the primary researcher. Each of the interviewees was given anonymous identification in the transcription process to keep confidentiality (Weloty, 2015). The interviews were first transcribed and an error check was conducted following the initial transcription. The error check was focused on any errors the initial transcription made.

Instruments

Selection of ProQOL

This research study is a mixed-methods approach to examine and determine the effect that student trauma is having on educators in this school district. The first part of the research study will utilize The ProQOL survey developed by the Professional Quality of Life Group (Hudnall-Stamm, 2014). The ProQOL survey is broken into two parts: compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Hudnall-Stamm (2014) developed the ProQOL survey in order to improve the professional quality of life for those professionals who are under a constraint of trauma. The ProQOL survey has been cited in over 200 peer-reviewed articles, 200 professional papers, and 130 dissertations. The ProQOL is considered a reliable tool to determine rates of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout (Abraham-Cook, 2012). The ProQOL survey is not a diagnostic tool to help treat compassion fatigue but a survey intended to be a guide for professionals to determine if they are at risk for compassion fatigue. For this research study, the ProQOL range scores

from highest to lowest for compassion fatigue were used to select a pool of interviewees for the qualitative research.

The ProQOL survey has been utilized since 1995 and most recently has been verified in a study at Seton Hall University (Abraham-Cook, 2012). The study conducted at Seton Hall focused on teachers in high-poverty, urban areas. In this research study, the participants were teachers in this school district. The replication of the Seton Hall study in comparison with the research study encompasses one main similarity: determining compassion fatigue rates for teachers working in high-poverty areas.

Some of the more recent studies utilizing the ProQOL survey help to solidify the reliability of the survey tool. One study by Sharp et al., (2017) used the ProQOL to determine baseline levels of compassion fatigue for special education teachers before and after a six-week period in which participants were sent daily mindfulness messages. After the six-week period, the participants were given the ProQOL again, and the data on compassion fatigue determined a significant drop in compassion fatigue rates.

Another recent study in Australia used the ProQOL to survey 253 doctors and developed a baseline of 17.1% for compassion fatigue. Of those 17.1% doctors surveyed who the ProQOL determined were suffering high rates of compassion fatigue. The data collected in this research study using the ProQOL survey not only helped determine the high levels of compassion fatigue, it also became a conversation starter on how to best deter compassion fatigue.

In New York City in 2018 a study by Rochelle & Buonnano (2018) looked surveyed 64 child protection workers using the ProQOL survey. The purpose of the

research study was to determine what might be contributing to the 40% turnover rate for child protection workers. The study found high levels of compassion fatigue among all 64 child protection workers. Early interventions were implemented as a result of the survey data in order to curb the high turnover rate.

The Professional Quality of Life Scale Survey of 30 questions determined what level of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout teachers are feeling within the past 30 days. The survey is a five-point Likert scale with the following range: 1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Very Often. The average score on the 30-question survey has a reliability factor of 0.88% with a standard deviation of 10 (Hudnall-Stamm, 2012).

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic data collected was used to help determine which current employees at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district are currently suffering from the highest rates of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The demographic data collected will also be used to statistically determine if age, years of experience, traumatic experiences, and education level are a determining factor in compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. Although the quantitative data collected via the ProQOL survey doesn't have any limitations and will not be reported as such, the importance of the demographic data lies within the research project's wanting to collect more data on trauma. The demographic data allowed for the research project to report the population demographics that are being surveyed but has no implications in reporting for the research study.

Data Analysis and Procedures

This research study on compassion fatigue for teachers in this Norther Plains Indian Reservation was an exploratory mixed methods design where the quantitative data was conducted first using the ProQOL survey. The range scores on the ProQOL survey from greatest to least were determined using SPSS and thus the interview participants were selected. The quantitative data collection included no variables (independent or dependent) simply because the ProQOL survey was used to determine the interview pool.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Collecting the quantitative data for this research study was done utilizing the ProQOL survey. The participants for this research study were sent the ProQOL survey via Survey Monkey using local school email addresses. All 109 participants were currently employed in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The consent form was attached to the email, which described the research study and allowed participants to opt out. The quantitative data returned was used to select those top six participants who scored the highest on the ProQOL survey for compassion fatigue.

The results from the ProQOL surveys were exported into SPSS. Data analysis was conducted on the results from the 109 participants who completed the ProQOL, and the overall range for compassion scores was delineated greatest to least for compassion fatigue. Table 4, and Table 5 demonstrate the levels of compassion satisfaction, secondary trauma, and burnout. Once the range of ProQOL scores was determined the top six participants with the highest scores were chosen to interview.

Table 4. S*econdary Trauma Stress-ProQOL survey*

The Sum of My Secondary Trauma Questions is:	So My Score Equals	And My Secondary Trauma Level is:
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Table 5. *Burnout Scores-ProQOL survey*

The Sum of My Burnout Questions is:	So My Score Equals	And My Burnout Level is:
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Qualitative Data Analysis

According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) qualitative data analysis must adhere to the following guidelines: “Data collection and analysis are interrelated processes; Concepts are the basic units of analysis; Categories must be developed and related; Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds; Analysis makes use of constant comparisons” (p. 6-10). The qualitative data analysis procedure set forth by Strauss and Corbin was the guiding principle in analyzing the qualitative data for this embedded case study design.

Once the saturation point is met for the participant interviews, the qualitative data analysis was conducted. The qualitative analysis for this research is grounded in coding and finding similar concepts within the interviews. Coding allows for keywords/phrases to be linked together within the interviews and grouped together to form categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once categories are determined through coding, then the properties within those categories will develop subcategories. The data analysis results in a grounded analytical and non-biased theoretical lens, which becomes the qualitative data.

The process of coding for this research project begins with transcribing the interviews and doing an initial read-through. The initial read-through of the interviews allowed the researcher to start developing themes within the interviews. On the second reading of the interviews, the coding of keywords must be developed. Breaking down the data analytically and interpreting through coding is a process that can be completed in a variety of ways (Corgin & Strauss, 1990). In this research study, coding was completed by highlighting and labeling common keywords and sections in the interviews. The relevant data through coding is determined by how often the words/phrases are repeated throughout the interviews.

For this research study, keywords such as empathy, sympathy, frustration, and anger are coded words that help to build a theme within the data analysis. The comparison of the coded words across all interviews is a mandatory analytical process. Coded words help to build themes within the qualitative data analysis. These themes help to null or void the research question(s) for this research study.

Taking notes and being transparent and honest within the coding process is a mandated process for qualitative data analysis. One option utilized in this research study to help keep transparency and improve data analysis is peer reviewing. Peer reviewing allows another researcher to help validate the qualitative data and eliminate bias.

Delineating the frequency of codes and themes in a hierarchy template allowed the researcher to determine which codes and themes were represented most often. Being a final step in the qualitative data analysis, the hierarchy method allowed for the most common codes/themes to evolve, which provides validity within the data.

Merging the Quantitative/Qualitative Data

This research design for this mixed methods research project uses an explanatory sequential design. An explanatory research design utilizes numerical data first followed by descriptive data (Sauro, 2015). The criteria for the participation in this research study were the participants had to currently be teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District. The ProQOL survey determined the range of compassion fatigue scores. The six highest compassion fatigue scores on the ProQOL survey formed the interview pool.

The merging of the data for this research study commenced when the ProQOL survey results were analyzed using SPSS, and the range scores were used to form an interview pool. The participants chosen to interview were in the top six overall scores for compassion fatigue scores based on their ProQOL survey results. The ProQOL survey was used to determine the rates and range scores of compassion fatigue for the teachers in

this school district for those teachers who are suffering the highest rates to be selected for the qualitative data collection.

A key process in the merging of the data for this research study was to determine the amount of time between the collection of quantitative and qualitative data (Almalki, 2016). In order for the participants in the interview process to maximize their interest in the interview process, the collection time for the quantitative to qualitative data was a minimum of two weeks. The purpose of the two-week collection was a determination that the data merge would be compromised if the participants felt pressured to interview in such a short turnaround time.

Validity of the Data

Data validity is the heart of any data collection. Data validity applies to both the design and methods of the research study (Brigham Young University, 2018). Factors that affect data validity are crucial in making sure that data collection is sound. The factors to control for validity in this research on compassion fatigue were date, time, location, interviewers, sequence of questions, answer time, prompts, (Research Design Review, 2018). Controlling these factors is imperative for the data validity of this research study.

Data validity for this mixed methods research study can be complex in merging a quantitative and qualitative focus. The organization of the qualitative data is key to achieving the desired results with the interviews.

In the qualitative interview process, it was determined that an alternative interviewer be chosen to conduct the interviews. A key component of collecting

interview data is making sure that the interviewer is unbiased (Statistical Solutions, 2019). Being that the researcher is an administrator in this school district, the determination was made to have an outside interviewer conduct the interviews. The alternative interviewer did transcribe the interviews only conduct them. The interviews were conducted on location at this school district. An incentive was offered to all six participants for their time.

Transcribing the interviews and not drawing conclusions is one of the key processes in the qualitative research analysis (Statistical Solutions, 2019). The deep and rich descriptions that the interviews pose will form trends, and the data interpretation will either help answer the research questions and validate the hypothesis or not.

The goal of this research study was to determine if this school district is having organizational issues with compassion fatigue and what can be done to improve it. Qualitative data can be a powerful tool in implementing social change, which makes the validity of the qualitative data imperative.

One process that helped with the trustworthiness of the qualitative data was triangulating the data (Statistics Solutions, 2019). Data triangulation for this research study was assured by changing interview locations, who is conducting the interviews, and secondary researcher analysis. The decision was made not only to have alternate interviewers but also have an alternate researcher analyze the qualitative data.

The uniqueness of qualitative data analysis, as opposed to quantitative data analysis, can be explained as:

> In qualitative data analysis there are no universally applicable techniques that can be applied to generate findings. Analytical and critical thinking

> skills of researcher plays significant role in data analysis in qualitative studies. Therefore, no qualitative study can be repeated to generate the same results (Research Methodology, 2018, p. 2).

Qualitative data must be organized and trends found during the data analysis procedure.

A key step in data analysis is eliminating bias on behalf of the researcher. The transcripts for this research study were shared with another researcher for data analysis. The process for both the primary researcher and alternate researcher was to find words or phrases that repeated and look for themes and concepts that overlapped each interview.

An important data analysis tool utilized in this research study was the usage of coding and chunking themes after transcribing the interviews. The initial coding of the interviews was conducted followed up by a line-by-line coding of the interviews. Line by line coding is a closer analysis of themes by highlighting keywords and phrases (Yi, 2018). Line-by-line coding allowed for the interviews to be dissected to determine what similarities the interviews had and thus that themes emerged.

At the conclusion of the qualitative data analysis, the primary researcher conducted a peer review of the qualitative data analysis. The peer review helped to solidify the findings in the qualitative data by allowing a discussion with alternate researchers on whether the themes generated for this research study were consistent. This process of peer review helps to eliminate bias in the qualitative data analyzation by having a neutral researcher(s) produce their own conclusions as to the outcomes of the qualitative data.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Findings

The trustworthiness of the qualitative data can be surmised in the following: the data collection must be credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable (Statistical Solutions, 2019). Guaranteeing trustworthiness with qualitative data can be challenging in any research study and thus the greatest care was taken on this research study to make sure those four critical pieces were met.

The credibility of the qualitative data is guaranteed by the selection of the participants using the range of scores using the ProQOL and selecting the pool of applicants from the results of the survey. The credibility of the data and the truthfulness of the results from the interviews in this research study are grounded in the process of interviewing and transcribing. All bias was eliminated by having an alternative interviewer(s).

The transferability of the qualitative data to other contexts such as other rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools can be demonstrated through the context of the interviews. The participants gave rich and thick descriptions as to how trauma was affecting them and their students and how compassion fatigue could be an even larger, systematic issue. The conclusions from this research study that other rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation schools are suffering from a systematic issue in addressing and treating compassion is a conclusion that the qualitative data can assume.

Confirming the qualitative data is one of the most critical steps in qualitative data analysis (Statistical Solutions, 2019). The greatest care in confirming the data in this research project was taken. It is critically important that any bias is eliminated in confirming and analyzing the qualitative data. The guarantee for the confirmation of the

data is grounded in the process of analyzing the qualitative data. The first step in confirmation was making sure the transcripts were accurate. The transcripts were read, and keywords and phrases were highlighted, and notes were taken to find themes in the interviews. A key step in confirming was making sure that any bias was eliminated by the researcher, which was the reason to select an alternative researcher to also analyze the data. A chart was developed with the more constant themes in the interviews at the top and a hierarchy developed for the themes. Every step in the confirmation of the data was focused on making sure the data was not skewed by the researcher.

Replication of Study

Replicating research studies can be accomplished in three ways: exact replication, empirical replication, and conceptual replication. Exact replication uses the same population and research procedures; empirical replication uses the same procedures and different population; conceptual replication uses the same population and different procedures (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). The exact replication of the data collection and analysis for other rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts should warrant similar results. The possible replication of this research study for further research studies helps to solidify the data collection and analysis for the current research study on compassion fatigue.

Positionality Statement

The primary researcher is an enrolled member of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. The primary researcher was concerned about how local Tribal Members of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation Tribe would respond to research being

conducted on such sensitive issues. Further, the role of "one of their own" conducting such sensitive research on such traumatic issues and exposing some of those issues could result in consequences for the primary researcher. It is rare for such sensitive, traumatic issues to be researched by a local Tribal member.

Summary

This research study on compassion fatigue in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district is a mixed-methods approach examining the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?
2. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, mental health availability, and organizational commitments to well-being?
3. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

This research study on teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district and the impact student trauma has on compassion fatigue is the focus of this research study. This mixed-methods approach to determine whether compassion fatigue and a lack of an early warning system are a system issue in this school is the overarching goal of the data collected.

The interview participants for this research were chosen from the ProQOL survey data analysis. Of the 109 teachers surveyed, the top six who scored the highest on the compassion fatigue subscale were chosen for qualitative interviews.

This in-depth qualitative data analysis (Maher & Dertadian, 2018) for this research study was very complex. The validity of the participant responses was of the utmost concern (Cypress, 2018). All attempts were made to eliminate bias and allow the qualitative data to determine the validity of the research project.

The trustworthiness of the qualitative data for this research study on compassion fatigue is grounded in the following: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Statistical Solutions, 2019). Due to a conflict with the primary researcher, an alternative researcher(s) was utilized. The primary researcher is an administrator in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district; therefore, to eliminate the bias and improve the creditability, an alternative researcher(s) was used for the interviews.

The merging of the ProQOL survey data and the participant interviews helped validate the research questions posed in this research study. The goal of this research study on compassion fatigue was to determine which teachers were suffering the highest rates of compassion fatigue and interview them to determine which trends emerge. The coding of the interviews was critical in finding trends and shaping the interpretation.

Data triangulation for the qualitative data was used to help validate the data. Alternate interviewer(s) were used in order to decrease any bias that might occur. Peer-debriefing was also used to help with the data triangulation. Peer-debriefing is getting those who have no vested interest in the research project (Hail et al., n.d.) to read the

interview transcripts and form their own conclusions about the trends they find in the data analysis. The time and date of the interviews were staggered in order to help reassure data triangulation and validity of the results.

CHAPTER 4—RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research Findings

This research was an embedded case design using survey data to select an interview pool. The ProQOL Survey was offered to all teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The scores from the ProQOL survey were ranked from least to greatest for compassion fatigue. The participants who scored in the high range for compassion fatigue were chosen for interviews.

This research study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?
2. How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being?
3. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

Description/Selection of Participants

The selection of participants for this embedded design research study were determined using the ProQOL survey. There were 109 teachers employed by this school district during the data collection phase of this project. This school district is

geographically remote with 950 students in grades K-12 of which 99% are Native American. All 109 teachers were sent the ProQOL survey using Survey Monkey via school email. A follow-up request for the ProQOL survey was sent via email after one week for participants who did not respond.

There were 74 participants who returned the ProQOL survey. The survey participation rate was 68%. The results of the ProQOL survey exported from Survey Monkey into SPSS and the scores were ranged from least to greatest to determine compassion fatigue levels. The results of the ProQOL survey determined that 11 participant's scores were in the high level based upon their scores. Those 11 participants were contacted email and offered the opportunity to participate in the research study. Six participants declined to participate in the research project. No reason was stated by four of the participants for the refusal to participate. One participant responded that his/her refusal was because they are leaving the district at the end of the school year. Six participants responded via email and agreed to participate in the research project. Contact was made with each participant to further explain the research project.

The interview participants were given the following pseudonyms: Amy, Barb, Catie, Darci, Evan, and Fred. The following is a biographical narrative of each participant.

Amy has over 30 years of teaching experience on Indian Reservation schools. This participant has been employed as a teacher in this school district for over 15 years as a third-grade teacher. Amy is considered a teacher-leader in this school district. Amy is a Non-Native American who has experienced personal trauma.

Barb is a special education teacher at this school district for four years. Barb is a Non-Native American who previously spent over 10 years working on Non-Indian Reservation schools. Barb has a caseload that includes some highly emotional students with severe behavior problems.

Catie is a tribally enrolled member of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Catie was born and raised on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Previous to working in this school district, Catie worked for over 15 years as a teacher at a local pre-school. Catie has been a kindergarten teacher at this school district for five years. Catie is involved in the local community and also coaches at this school district. Catie often utilizes Indian Education for All and local Native American teachings in the classroom.

Darci is a middle school teacher at this school district. Darci is a Non-Native American who has worked in this school district for the past three years. Darci had no previous teaching experience on Indian Reservation schools prior to working on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

Evan is a Non-Native American who has over 20 years working in elementary schools in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. Evan is very involved in the school community and supervises the afterschool program at this school district. Evan was born and raised in a community off the Indian Reservation but for the past 20 years has lived on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School.

Fred is a tribally-enrolled member of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Fred has taught at all the schools on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Fred currently teaches in the middle school in this school district. Fred is a teacher-leader who

has garnered respect from both the school and community for the excellent job of working with students. Fred has been a coach and club supervisor. Fred lives on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation.

The following is a table demonstrating the demographic data for all six participants.

Table 6. *Participant Demographic Data*

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Years of Experience	Education Level
Amy	50-55	F	Caucasian	30-35	Masters
Barb	50-55	F	Caucasian	20-25	Masters
Catie	45-50	F	Sioux	20-25	Bachelors
Darci	45-50	F	Caucasian	5-10	Bachelors
Evan	40-45	M	Caucasian	20-25	Bachelors
Fred	35-40	M	Sioux	10-15	Bachelors

Additional demographic data was provided by all participants (See Appendix A). All of the participants were currently employed as a teacher in this school district. Sixty percent of the participants were a K–4 teacher and 40% participants were a 5–8 teacher. 60% of the participants were identified as Caucasian and 40% were identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native. Fifty percent of the participants have over 20 years of experience teaching and 50% had less than 20 years of experience teaching. Sixty percent of the participants had a bachelor's degree as the highest degree attained and 40% had a master's degree.

ProQOL Survey Results

The ProQOL survey was offered via Survey Monkey to all 109 teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Seventy-two participants returned the ProQOL

survey and the scores were ranked using SPSS for compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The breakdown of the participant scores for compassion fatigue is as follows: 11 participants scored in the "moderate" to "high" range; 42 participants scored in the "moderate" to "average" range; 19 participants scored in the "low" range. The embedded case design used the ProQOL survey results to select participants in the "high" range for the qualitative research process. The following tables represents the ProQOL survey results.

Table 6 and Table 7 demonstrate the value scales for secondary traumatic stress and burnout based on the results of the ProQOL survey. A score of 42 or more on either the secondary traumatic stress or burnout scale is in the "high" range.

Table 7. *Secondary Traumatic Stress Scores-ProQOL Survey*

The Sum of My Secondary Traumatic Questions are:	And My Secondary Stress Score Level is:
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

The recommendation from the ProQOL survey for secondary traumatic stress scores are as follows:

> If your score is above 41, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013, p. 2).

Table 8. *Burnout Scores-ProQOL Survey*

The Sum of My Burnout Questions is:	And My Burnout Level is:

22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

The recommendation from the ProQOL Survey for burnout scores is as follows:

> If your score is below 23, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 41, you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a "bad day" or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013, p. 2).

Table 6 and Table 7 use a score of 42 as a determination for "high." Scores from 23–41 are determined as moderate. Scores below 22 are determined to be low. Having a "low" burnout and secondary traumatic score is desirable. Having a "high" compassion satisfaction score is desirable.

Participant Scores: ProQOL

Table 9 demonstrates the satisfaction scores, burnout scores, and secondary stress scores for the participants who were selected to be interviewed. Based on the ProQOL survey, all of the participants scored in the moderate to high range for burnout and secondary stress. This embedded case design research study used the ProQOL score ranking to select participants for the interview pool. These participants were interviewed and their responses transcribed for thematic analysis.

Table 9. *Participant ProQOL Scores*

	Satisfaction Score	Burnout Score	Secondary Stress Score
	Total	Total	Total
Amy	38	30	34

Barb	33	30	34
Catie	29	35	35
Darci	47	33	36
Evan	28	33	36
Fred	48	42	43

(K. Erickson, personal communication, March 11, 2020).

Results of the Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis developed the following three themes: student/home-life, school response to trauma, and teacher/student trauma**.**

Theme 1: Student Home-Life

This Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school dis rural and poverty stricken. The home-life that many of the students in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation live in is filled with abuse and neglect. Participants in this research study loved and cared for their students and wanted nothing more for their students than for them to be successful.

Unfortunately, participants felt that a student's home-life is detrimental to the academic/emotional success of students in this school district. Participants felt that the power of a student's home-life had more leverage than the amount of caring and love the participants could offer to the students.

Participants felt a continual worry about their students throughout the day and into the night. The inability to control what happens in the home and the safety of their students in the home was a theme found throughout the data analysis.

Subtheme: Student Safety Concerns

Participants were concerned with the safety of students when school concludes for the day. Participants were frustrated by the struggles students encounter at home and the possibility that the student will be harmed. The worry that participants had over the safety of the students was continual and difficult to handle emotionally. A continual worry about the safety of their students was a subtheme that all participants had.

Amy voiced the frustration in knowing the students' struggles when they get home and how safety is an issue. Amy's response demonstrates how when students leave school their home-life is something Amy cannot control and the worry for students' safety is difficult. Amy struggles with the inability to "save" her students from homes that are often filled with violence and trauma.

> And then when I watch them go out the door I worry about them. Because I know some of them just don't go home or they're not loved. And I think that's the hardest part of the job is sometimes every year I come home said I could take this. But I worry about them when they go home because I know some of them, they don't get love, they get ignored, or they're just there. There's no place for them. So I think that's the hard part and so that you can't help them pass the door. I can't save them. Maybe. Maybe that's the thing. I can't save them. So it's hard. (Amy)

The response by Amy is emotional and exemplifies how much trying to help and save students is nearly impossible due to outside factors. Amy is frustrated in the response by the inability to control influences in the students' lives. The response demonstrated the following feeling among other participants in this research study: Success in a students' life in this school district is often a concrete wall surrounded by failure, and breaking down those walls is difficult and nearly impossible.

Catie noted how difficult it can be when children go home for the day. Catie demonstrates how difficult having no control over students' home-life can be emotionally draining for teachers. Catie felt that a student's home and safety are more concerning than anything academic and the emotional turmoil, at times, can be difficult to handle. The worry of what is happening to the students begins when they leave and subsides when the student walks back through the classroom door the next day.

> So it's not like I can turn that stuff off mentally in my mind and say, "Okay, that day is over with them. I'm going home and I'm just going to live my life at home and not thinking nothing of it." But now I lay there at night and I'm tossing and I'm turning and I'm thinking "Oh God, I hope she's okay. I hope somebody is in that house with them. I hope she really isn't home alone." (Catie)

Catie's love and care for students is evident in the worry for their safety at home. A lack of sleep and worry for students by Catie lends to a compassion fatigue concern. Catie is unable to let go of the emotions when students leave the classroom due to the love and care for them.

Barb is a special education teacher at this school district. Barb has a caseload of special education students with an array of issues. Some of the students are emotionally disturbed and learning disabled. Other students serviced by Barb were born with fetal alcohol syndrome or addicted to methamphetamine. Barb's students come from homes where violence is the norm and safety is an issue.

Barb has worked closely with families and understands the situations that students in this special education class live in. The response demonstrated how much Barb cares and loves students and the fear that she has when students go home. The frustration for Barb demonstrated how the home-life for students is a powerful piece of that students'

life and sometimes the loving and caring from the teacher is not enough to save the student.

> I do. I try. I just care. That's the thing. I care about those kids and you know, some you love more than others. You know, there's always going to be those ones that are just- there's one now that I, kind of, want to steal him and take him home. I won't, you know? I don't know how many times the kids' parents have been thrown in jail, the kids have been yanked in the different relative's houses. (Barb)

The concern for Barb demonstrates how "taking a student home" is not a viable option but one that Barb yearns for. Barb felt that the only option to help students who live in trauma-filled homes that can be dangerous is to remove the student. Barb's response demonstrates the frustration with the home-life of her students and the dangers they encounter.

Catie details how a student who is five years old goes home to domestic violence and both parents being jailed. This student further states how "taking care of themselves" is often the norm at home because of the parents being incarcerated.

> "My mom and dad went to jail because my mom hit my dad and my dad hit my mom. And my grandma called the cops on them so now they're both in jail. So now we're at home by ourselves again because we know how to take care of ourselves." Those things, I mean I couldn't even imagine at that age- 5 years old, I mean to me, they took so big right now because of how mature she is. (Catie)

The response Catie gave demonstrates how domestic abuse not only affects the student but also teachers. Catie feels that the students' home life is a safety concern, which is resulting in secondary trauma for Catie. Catie struggles emotionally with a five-year-old student who is witnessing domestic abuse and having to live in a home where safety is a major concern.

Darci has worked and resided in the community for four years spoke about how the home-life students come from often “gets to me.” The emotion that Darci demonstrates echoes the other participants in that the love and care teachers feel for students is overshadowed by the abuse and neglect at home. Darci’s response demonstrates how safety is a concern for her students at home and the difficulty in not being able to have control over the students’ home-life. Darci’s response demonstrates she has been to some student’s homes and knows the families. Darci has first-hand experience in the home-life of her students and feels that safety is an issue.

> Sometimes it gets to me because I see it. I mean, I've been to some of these kid's houses, and know some of their families, and know what they've been through. And it is, it's hard to, "Wow, you're here", and it's just like if I was that age and that stuff happened, would I come to school? But I was like, "Well, it's better than sitting at home and dwelling in it", so I can see why they're coming to school, but sometimes it gets to me. (Darci)

Darci feels that having students “sitting at home and dwelling in it” is a primary reason for coming to school. “It” refers to the detrimental home-life students are living in and having to deal with drugs, alcohol, domestic abuse, and neglect. In the short span of four years, Darci has developed a frustration for the homes the students live in and the love and care for them but often cannot keep them from dangerous situations.

Catie echoed the feeling that school is a safe place for their students to be. Students come to school for the safety that school provides. Schools provide routines and too often home-life is a place that is detrimental to a students’ safety.

> They want to be here because home life, obviously something isn't good or they want to get out of that situation. They know the school's a safe place. They know there's a routine. At home there might not be. (Catie)

Catie reiterated how students will use school as a "safe place" and how their home-life can be a can be a place where "something isn't good." Catie is concerned about students and the dangers they might encounter at home.

Subtheme: Caring/Helping Them

A subtheme that developed from the data analysis was how all participants cared and loved their students but were frustrated by the inability to control what happens to a student when that student leaves the school building. In asking the question: What do you find to be the biggest challenges working at this school? Participants gave answers about how they cared and loved their students to a point where they wanted to take them home.

The love and caring the participants had for their students simply was not enough to help students with the trauma the students deal with at home. The responses given by the participants demonstrated that an understanding of the traumatic experiences students have at home were the norm, and loving and caring for them was the only response the teachers felt they could control and offer to help their students. Participants understood that all the love and care could not replace the emotional trauma children face as a result of their home-life.

Amy provided an example of how a teacher's loving and caring for students is overtaken by frustration. Amy described how the love and care for students are overshadowed by the issues that happen at home for students in this school district.

Amy felt that the positive interactions with students at school are depleted once the student got home and dealt with the abuse and neglect. Continual worry once the students went home is a profound emotional issue for Amy. There is little engagement,

love, and positive interactions in the home. Amy felt that the only solution provided was an alternative home-life for some of the students, which is impossible.

> I think they're so used to it, some people just dig at them all day, and then they're not used to me coming back around and giving them those four or five compliments and building them back up. And then when I watch them go out the door I worry about them. Because I know some of them just go home where they're not loved. And I think that's the hardest part of the job is sometimes every day I come home said I want to take them all. My husband said if we took all them we would have no room. But I worry about them when they go home because I know some of them, they don't get love, they get ignored, or they're just there. (Amy)

The response by Amy demonstrates that all the care and love in the world is meaningless compared to the power of what happens in the home. The sense of frustration by Amy about how "building them back up" emotionally is difficult and tiring day after day. Students went home to situations that are not healthy and often are depleted emotionally as they returned to school. This cycle is difficult to solve but Amy continues to love and care for students.

Fred is an enrolled member of this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Fred is a strong advocate for Native American students and loves and cares deeply for students in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. The inability for parents to provide a stable home for their children is a frustration seen in the following response.

> There's six kids or something and I don't know how many times the kids' parents have been thrown in jail, the kids have been yanked in the different relative's houses. (Fred)

Fred demonstrates how caring for students is overshadowed by the circumstances the students live in. Having parents who are incarcerated is often normal for students. Fred invariably wants to help and save students in this school district; unfortunately, the home-life the students come from deters student success.

Subtheme: Teachers' Inability to Separate Professional and Personal Life

Evan was poignant in stating how when teachers leave work they find it hard to leave the issues at work. Evan's response demonstrates how caring can take an emotional toll on the teacher. Evan loves and cares for students and wants to help them, but the issues that arise at home for the student are not controllable and are frustrating.

> There's always stuff in my mind. I do go home and try to decompress a little bit or just zone out just too kinda let it sink through. I try not to have things on my mind, especially when I go to bed. But once in a while, you do it, especially when you've had a kid during the day that's had a rough day. You just couldn't figure out what was going on. You couldn't help him. (Evan)

Evan is not only concerned when students have a bad day but also attempts to find a solution. For Evan, the solution is rooted in helping that student, and helping that student is frustrating due to outside circumstances. Evan's frustration from trying to help his students results in Evan being frustrated and emotionally drained.

Fred's response demonstrates the frustration and emotion attached to students. Being born and raised on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation gives Fred another dimension to caring and loving students. Fred described how having a big heart and caring and loving students seems detrimental to the teachers' emotional health. Caring, loving, and wanting the best for students is unavoidable but difficult for teachers in this school district.

> Everything I do is for these kids. So that's of how I deal with-- Just keep reminding me, myself, you know "Who you here for?" The kids and that gets me through. Cause I love these kids. I really do. (Fred)

The love and care Fred has for students are undeniable, and the emotional toll students' circumstances have are difficult for teachers to handle emotionally. Whether its

anger, frustration, or exhaustion, Fred described how helping students in this school district is highly emotional due to the circumstances students dealt with outside of school.

The response by Fred demonstrates that all the caring and love offered by teachers is outweighed by the power of the traumatic experiences children deal with at home. The emotion Fred had ends up in anger, crying, and frustration in the inability to control the home-life for students.

The response Catie gave details how not knowing about a student's personal life is difficult. Catie feels by not knowing about a student's personal and home life it is hard to deal with the behaviors in the classroom. Catie does not want to be too intrusive when trying to figure out what a student might be dealing with emotionally.

> You just see the change in their behavior and they let you know through either not speaking or being really weepy that they don't like what's going on. And you could tell that there is something different in their life and it's like you try to figure out by not getting nosy and getting into that child's personal business. But at the same time, how can we help them if we don't know? So it is tough. (Catie)

Fred is Native American and enrolled in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation states that caring for students is a priority. Moving forward and keeping the main thing in regards to the students must be kept in perspective.

> Just keep plugging away. One foot in front of the other. Never stop caring. Never stop caring about the kids. Never stop caring about your job, what you're here to do. Just keep moving forward. And just-- I tell myself all the time, "Hey man, I'm not doing it for anybody else but these kids. It's for the kids." (Fred)

Evan, a community resident for two decades, details how 20 years ago alcohol was a major concern in the community and among households. Evan felt that drug use has now replaced alcohol, and it is difficult to watch children whose home-life

continually allows them to fall into the cycle of abuse. Evan loves and cares for all students in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation community and wants for all students to be successful. Unfortunately, drugs have perpetuated a cycle of abuse to continue from one generation to the next, and without an improvement in students' home-life, the cycle of abuse will continue.

> When I first was working here, alcohol was the big issue that was making life hard for kids. Now, it's drugs. It's hard to stay here and watch the cycle continue because you want to do something to help all the kids. (Evan)

The response Evan gave demonstrated the history and experience they have in working with families and communities in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school. Evan continues to live in the community and educate students in this school district fully expecting no amount of caring and love can truly save a student when the cycle of abuse in the home is allowed to continue.

Barb was concerned about how generational neglect was not an excuse to help students succeed in this school district. The circumstances behind a student's home should never be an excuse to provide the best education for every student.

> You got to give this kid a chance no matter what the history is or who the family is. (Barb)

Barb felt no matter the students' circumstances and students' background, the job of educating of the student is imperative. Barb felt that not judging a student simply based upon their demographic characteristics was inexcusable.

Catie, a kindergarten teacher, was born and raised in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation community and knows her students' parents and families. She spoke concretely about how students have no engagement at home. Any sort of academics for a

student is often limited to putting their child in front of the television or giving them electronic devices. Kindergarten students will bring their personal stories into the classroom and they are heartbreaking.

> A lot of kids don't have one on one at home. Kids are put in front of a TV or a tablet or a computer or a phone and that's the babysitter. Nobody reads to them. Nobody does anything for them. They're told to be quiet and it's out of my way kind of thing. Now the kids tell you a lot of stories when they come in from home and share what their mom and dads did and yes, it's heartbreaking sometimes. (Catie)

This statement by Catie underscores her belief that home-life for these kindergarten students is filled with no engagement. Children are in homes where abuse and neglect have replaced the nurturing goals of parenting, and Catie is frustrated by that outcome. Children are told to be quiet and stay out of the way, and all the love and caring that Catie can offer will not change that home-life for that student.

Summary of Student Home Life

In conclusion of this first theme, developed through the data analysis, teachers perceived that a student's home life on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation profoundly influenced their success at school. Participants loved, cared, and wanted to save their students from a life that is often cyclical in their home-life: A life of abuse.

Participants were frustrated by the inability to control a students' home-life and at times felt powerless against the home-environment. Participants felt the only part they could control was to love and care for their students and provide them the best learning environment possible knowing that when they leave the classroom for the day the home-life for students often brings dread and negativity.

Theme 2: School Response to Trauma

In the interview process, the participants were asked, "How do you feel the school district helps support you emotionally to deal with students who bring traumatic experiences to school?" The second theme that emerged was framed by that interview question.

This school district has students who live in homes where violence and abuse are a daily occurrence. Students are continually exposed to traumatic events, and their trauma if often felt by teachers in this school district. Secondary traumatic or post-secondary trauma is trauma received from others (Hiles et al., 2015). Continual exposure to secondary trauma can lead to higher levels of compassion fatigue. The teachers who participated in this research study are not only suffering secondary traumatic stress but also feel that this school district needs to do more to help alleviate secondary traumatic stress from those students who bring their trauma to school. The following subthemes emerged regarding the school district's support for teachers' socioemotional well-being: relationships, training, and supportive resources. The participants felt that relationships with staff, a lack of training, and more supportive resources, such as counselors for teachers are all contributors to the main theme of how this school district lacks the ability to meet the socioemotional needs of teachers.

Subtheme: Relationships with Colleagues

School environments are built upon relationships among staff, students, parents, and community partners. Strong relationships between students and teachers can be a powerful piece to a positive school environment. Participants in this research study lean

heavily on other teachers to help them through the tough times. A strong positive relationship with other teachers within the community was a definitive emotional support tool that helped teachers with personal and secondary trauma. This school district currently has no formal support system to help with compassion fatigue. Teachers have found that relationships with colleagues help to provide an informal support system for emotional issues.

Amy has a history of personal trauma and has developed expertise in understanding and coping with individual trauma. She has 30-plus years of teaching experience in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations and feels that relationships are a powerful tool in helping to alleviate emotional stress caused by secondary traumatic stress. The lack of relationships especially from the educational leadership in schools can result in a situation where the trust and communication are lacking. Building relationships can result in teachers who are suffering from emotional trauma to approach the educational leader and possibly seek help.

> The most important part because relationships is what you need to build first, then I mean go after the other stuff. And so I think some of the leaders that aren't good leaders forget to build their relationships first. Get to know their stuff, get to know their teachers, walk around the building get to know the kids. Build that relationship first, then go after the staff just like we're being told to build our relationships with our children first and I believe if you don't make a family in your classroom, then you're not. (Amy)

Amy feels that without relationships the educational leader will lack a trust that is needed to have thoughtful and confidential conversations about teachers suffering from secondary traumatic stress. Without a strong relationship with staff, the possibility of identifying and building a fostering an employee wellness program to address secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue will cease to exist.

Evan noted how colleagues' classrooms are the main support system utilized by teachers to help deal with secondary emotional stress. Evan feels safe in talking with other colleagues when emotional problems arise. Other teachers' classrooms are considered the solution for alleviating emotional trauma in this school district.

> I personally, safe place here at school. I think with my colleagues or in the classroom, that's kind of what we do. I feel safe talking with my colleagues about things. If I have a problem with something that's going on, I feel okay with doing that. So I'd have to say yes. My colleague's classrooms, that's my safe place. That's where I go if I need. (Evan)

The response by Evan is a subtheme that other participants had in responding to how they dealt with secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue: An informal support system that was built upon trust and relationships, which helped teachers cope and alleviate some emotional stress. These relationships that teachers have with other staff members are an extremely useful tool utilized often by teachers within this school district.

Subtheme: Training on Compassion Fatigue

Another subtheme emerged as to how often this school district offers trainings and support for compassion fatigue and trauma. A lack of training is something the interviewees stated was a concern for themselves and this school district. Teaching in an environment where secondary trauma is a constant issue, and not consistently offering professional training opportunities that address the topic only allows compassion fatigue to fester.

Fred felt the educational leaders and school district currently does not do enough to provide emotional support and trainings for compassion fatigue and secondary

traumatic stress. Fred felt that emotional support for secondary traumatic stress is available upon request or when needed.

> I don't think they provide a lot of emotional support but if I was to ask for it, they would be there for me any minute. They really would. And I think they would be there for anybody, not just me because I know them personally. (Fred)

The response by Fred demonstrates a key finding for dealing with school response to trauma in that preventative measures to identify and support compassion fatigue are not the norm for this district. Fred felt that the school's response to trauma was only reserved for those "who ask for it." Teachers rarely formally request a need for help with emotional issues like secondary traumatic stress from the school district.

Evan felt that this school district doesn't do enough to support new teachers who enter a high-trauma environment. Evan feels that new teachers are often ill-prepared emotionally to deal with student trauma and the school district does not do enough to prepare them for the secondary traumatic stress they deal with. Evan feels "bad" for the new teachers because the environment they are entering is difficult because the students bring such intense emotional issues to the classroom. Evan stated that those teachers who are new to the area are at a disadvantage for handling the emotions they will encounter in the classroom due to a lack of experience working with such highly traumatized students.

> Well, making everyone aware of what trauma is and how does it affect kids and what can we do as teachers because we can't just wave our wand and make it go away. A lot of times, I think, when new teachers come in, they're unprepared for our students. And sometimes they don't get the training like they probably should. I kinda feel bad for them because when you're a new teacher and you come into an environment like this, it's pretty wide eye opening, especially if you're not from the area or know anything about it. (Evan)

Evan is not only concerned with the school district's lack of training for new teachers regarding the trauma they will encounter but is also frustrated with the current system to identify and support trauma and compassion fatigue. Evan, a 20-year veteran teacher within this district, has often dealt with highly traumatized students. The feelings Evan has about the lack of trainings and support for new teachers offered by this school district stems from personal experience.

Subtheme: Lack of Support Staff/Tools

Amy responded that hiring a counselor to specifically deal with the school's response to trauma is an overdue and needed necessity. Working with students in high trauma areas like this school district, the continuation of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress is a certainty. Being that students will continue to bring trauma to the classroom, Amy felt that a counselor for faculty and staff members could help with the schools' response to trauma. She stated, "I think we need a counselor. I think we need time to go, I think we need some more tools, I think that's why some of the young kids aren't coming into teaching now."

Amy was concerned that the low numbers of teaching candidates could be due to the amount of emotional trauma teachers deal with. She felt the need to provide more tools to deal with highly traumatized children could curb the low number of teachers entering the field. Hiring a counselor for all staff is a possible tool offered to help current and new teachers deal with secondary traumatic stress.

Catie is concerned with new teachers not having the tools to deal with highly emotional students. Catie believes that current students are lacking empathy and are even

more difficult to deal with than students who are diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. Training sessions to help teachers cope with the trauma that is inflicted on them have been non-existent and Catie feels that the school district needs to do something to help out all teachers.

> I think the trauma that we do is put my kind of kids are dealing with or even tougher than the fetal alcohol syndrome because these kids have no empathy. Some of them don't, there's nothing. That's tougher, I think and especially for a young teacher that's coming out if they get a room like that. You might lose them for a day they don't have tools. We just don't have those tools. We were taught so, as a district, I think knowing where to go talk to, but I think we need somebody now to talk to or somebody to listen, and then give us something to help us out. (Catie)

The response given by Catie demonstrates the frustration that teachers in this school district are having to succumb to in dealing with secondary traumatic stress. There is no mandated or optional training to help new and current teachers with the effects of student trauma. Catie feels that teachers "need somebody to talk to or somebody to listen," and the school district is offering nothing in its response to trauma. The tools needed to help teachers identify and support compassion fatigue are non-existent, and Catie is concerned with this lack of response by the school district.

Amy is concerned about keeping teachers in the teaching profession. Amy believes perpetuating the lack of a support system and training to help support all teachers will result in teacher turnover. Not only do school districts need to train teachers on dealing with highly traumatized students but colleges need to do their part also. Teachers who are newly graduated need training either from college preparation programs or school districts in order to provide new teachers with the emotional capacity

to successfully navigate the challenges they will encounter in schools similar to this school district.

> I now think we need to start looking for how do we help teachers and how do we keep teachers in teaching. Because it is hard-You know even for us all these some of those kids are toughies to teach. So I feel like we need some counseling. I think sometimes we need some more training on trauma. I think they need to do it now on the college. I think they need to teach students or teachers that are coming into this about trauma and how to deal with it. (Amy)

Amy spoke about how emotionally difficult it is to deal with difficult students in this school district. A lack of training on how to handle such highly emotional students and emotional situations is the norm. Teaching the "toughies" in this school district will continue, and not preparing teachers to handle the emotional stress through training and tools is inexcusable. Amy feels this district must do a better job of responding to student trauma by being more preventative.

Summary of the School's Response to Trauma

The school's response to trauma, or lack of response, was a concern expressed by the participants. The concerns expressed focused on both current support systems for teachers as well as capacity building among new teachers in having a system to identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. Training sessions were not offered regularly, and often other colleagues were the only support system used by teachers to help with compassion fatigue.

The feeling among participants was that more trainings were needed to provide teachers with the tools they need or help them develop their own tools. Furthermore, the possibility of hiring a counselor for teachers was suggested as a form of support that the

district could provide. Without a formal school response to combat compassion fatigue, all new teachers will continue to struggle emotionally and possibly succumb to emotional distress and leave the profession.

Theme 3: Teacher/Student Trauma

ProQOL survey results indicated that each of the participants selected for an interview were suffering from their own primary trauma as well as secondary trauma from students concurrently. Primary trauma involved first-hand experience and includes events such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, suicide, and death. Primary trauma could have occurred recently or during childhood.

Secondary trauma occurs in helping others cope with primary trauma. In this research study, the secondary trauma of the participating teachers occurred through the students they taught in this school district. All participants spoke about how secondary trauma has affected them. All participants were concerned with their own emotional issues and compassion fatigue due to the daily exposure to secondary trauma.

For participants who have a history of primary trauma, the effect of secondary trauma from students can be concerning. Witnessing domestic abuse of a child and working with children who are victims of domestic abuse was emotional for teachers. Furthermore, not having addressed primary trauma or secondary trauma with some sort of support can be a highly emotional concern for teachers suffering from both conditions.

Teacher and student trauma weaves itself in daily routines in this school district. Some teachers have an abundant amount of primary trauma and other teachers do not. Some students have an abundant amount of primary trauma and bring it to school and

others do not. The overlapping primary and secondary trauma creates a learning environment where student trauma and teacher trauma are a constant issue.

Subtheme: Bonds with Trauma

The ability to cope with primary trauma can be difficult. Students in this school district have suffered unwanted and extreme traumatic experiences. Teachers in this school district not only deal with secondary trauma from students but some of them are also dealing with personal, primary trauma. The trauma that teachers and students have creates a bond where both groups relate to each other and coping.

Amy has a vast history of primary trauma. Primary trauma relates to the direct traumatizing experience. She explained how having a history of trauma allows the teacher to have a better understanding and relationship with students who have been traumatized. The traumatizing experiences that Amy suffered give her credibility with Native American students in this school district. Having credibility by letting a student know that “you have been there” is an advantage in helping students gain trust with the teacher and open up about traumatizing events in their lives.

Secondary trauma has given Amy an unforeseen outcome in helping students to heal from their own primary trauma. Teaching students who have been traumatized has facilitated Amy to form a stronger bond with students who are traumatized. Promoting healing and being able to understand traumatized students is an outcome that Amy felt strongly about due to having that history of primary trauma.

> I know how to relate to these kids because I've been there and so I've become very outspoken about my trauma. And then it gives us or sometimes I don't even tell them that I can tell or tell them I know what it's like to have had something happened to you. So for me, it's cathartic, also for them, but it's

> also very healing for me to be able to help kids. It was some kind of trauma just like I've been through. So for me, it's like that. So and it also helps me erase that bad spot that I think I have. (Amy)

Having a history of trauma and working with traumatized students gives a sense of common ground and can be a tool to help support primary trauma. Amy details how the advantage of primary trauma and working with traumatized students is "erasing that bad spot" that Amy has from a profound negative childhood experience.

Having a bond that both student and teacher share in trauma not only creates a relationship that brings them closer but also creates an emotional support system. Being able to "share trauma" with students creates a classroom where teachers can relate better, cope, and discuss the effects of trauma. Amy shares a bond with students in that both the teacher and students have a history of traumatic experiences, and sharing and understanding that trauma allows both to cope and relate to each other.

Subtheme: Compassion/Job Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is the feeling that you are in control of the environment you are working in (Mckim & Smith-Adcock, 2014) and can result if the secondary traumatic stress experienced by teachers is being regulated properly (Mairean, 2016). Teaching highly emotional, traumatized students did not result in the participants having negative feelings towards students or the job of teaching. Rather, working with highly emotional, traumatized students resulted in the participants feeling more compassion satisfaction and being more motivated to help students be successful in this school district.

Teaching students with highly emotional issues that live in homes where trauma is the norm is a difficult task. Participants faced extreme student trauma on a daily basis. Despite all the student trauma teachers faced, compassion satisfaction for teaching still remained high according to the participants' ProQOL survey scores.

The participants' perceptions show that compassion satisfaction for teaching was impacted by secondary traumatic stress from students in a positive way. Primary trauma and secondary trauma from students only motivated the teachers in this school district to love their job more.

Evan defined their greatest challenge is trying to make the students in their classroom comfortable and productive. The respondents felt that they wanted more than the students to feel like school is a safe place. Through all the challenges, Evan is determined to make a difference for the students in this school district.

Evan acknowledges that challenges are a daily occurrence for teachers in this school district. Evan demonstrates how every day the goal is to provide the best learning environment for students. The satisfaction that Evan has in his job lies within the willingness to continually come to work and provide the best education for their students. Controlling the home-life of students is impossible but controlling the classroom and enjoying the job of teaching is imperative for Evan. The only control that Evan has with their students is the eight hours a day they are here. Evan understands the challenges students face and the trauma they bring to school.

> That's my biggest challenge-- trying to make sure that the kids are here to be educated and not have to worry about outside influences and whatever's going on at home. I want to try to make them know that they can-- for the

> eight hours they're here, they can at least separate themselves from any sort of problems or bad situations that they have at home. (Evan)

Evan is not ignoring the fact that students are struggling emotionally with trauma and does not make any excuses to not educate them. Evan is extremely motivated to help students succeed. Compassion satisfaction for Evan is high and the love for the job of teaching is evident.

Fred responds to how working with Native American students is enjoyable and satisfying. Fred has a personal stake in educating Native American students being that Fred is a Native American and "proud" of being a Native American. Fred is adamant that compassion/job satisfaction comes from the relatability between the teacher and students both being Native American. The greatest satisfaction for Fred was knowing that a student can relate to the teacher simply because the teacher is Native American.

> Just working with our kids and I say, "our kids," I really enjoy working with Native American students obviously. I'm Native American, I'm very proud of that. And when I was growing up, we had very few Native American teachers. And I felt very few of my teachers could relate to me because of that. So I think that gives the most satisfaction is being able to relate to my students and having my students know that I'm one of them. (Fred)

The response by Fred further demonstrates that compassion satisfaction for some teachers originates from when that teacher was a student. Fred refers to how the lack of Native American teachers in school is now a motivating factor to keep teaching students of Native American descent. Being a Native American provides Fred with all the motivation and compassion satisfaction to keep working with students who are highly traumatized and bring their trauma to school.

Darci details how in five years working at this school district, the love for the job is immense. Darci's longevity and love for the job keep him motivated to do the job. The

feeling of satisfaction for the job for Darci demonstrates how dealing with dire situations can be rewarding.

> Yeah, coming up on my fifth year. It's almost starting to blend, I'm even forgetting. It is like, "How long have I been here?" The kids are just like, "You've been here forever." I said, "Yeah, there you go." Yes, I'm coming up on my fifth year. It's awesome. I love it here. (Darci)

The satisfaction Darci has for teaching is reflected in the feeling of time passing by quickly. The pride that Darci has in not surviving but thriving and loving the job of teaching certainly is evident in his response.

The response given by Darci refers to a blending among students in regards to teaching and living on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Blending with students for Darci refers to the ability to relate to the situations students are having to deal with. Darci's job is more satisfying due to the experience in working with traumatized students and being able to understand them better.

Subtheme: Generational/Historical Trauma

Native Americans have long been associated with generational and historical trauma. Having a loss of culture, lives, and land all attribute to a wounding and scaring defined as historical trauma (Native Hope, 2020). Generational/historical trauma is inherited by contemporary Native Americans and continues to be a factor in Native American societies.

Barb responded to how she felt students in this school district were victims of historical/generational poverty. Barb felt that if students were not suffering from direct trauma as a result of things happening in the home, they were still suffering from

generational trauma. Generational trauma is trauma that children are born into, and Barb is aware that students in this school district have trauma in their background.

> I mean, I think, because I think that's something that most of our kids here, even the ones you know, have some trauma in their background. Even if it's just generational trauma. (Barb)

The response by Barb is a concern that all school districts who educate Native American children need to have trauma has been and will continue to be an issue for Native American students. Barb not only understands that students in this school district are suffering from current trauma but also are likely to be suffering generational and historical trauma.

Subtheme: Academics and Trauma

Woven into all the trauma that students and teachers have is a strong commitment from teachers to make sure academics is a priority. Participants in this research understood that primary trauma for their own traumatic experiences combined with secondary trauma from students will have effects academically for their students. Data analysis determined that even in classroom situations where primary and secondary trauma was abundant, the teachers always held high expectations and never used trauma as an excuse to not perform to the best of their ability.

Evan defined their greatest challenge is trying to make the students in their classroom comfortable and productive. The respondent felt that they wanted more than the students to feel like school is a safe place. Through all the challenges, Evan is determined to make a difference for their students.

Evan acknowledged that challenges are daily occurrences for teachers in this school district. Evan demonstrated how every day the goal is to provide the best learning environment for students. The satisfaction that Evan has in his job lies within the willingness to continually come to work and provide the best education for their students. Controlling the home-life of students is impossible but controlling the classroom and enjoying the job of teaching is imperative for Evan.

> That's my biggest challenge--trying to make sure that the kids are here to be educated and not have to worry about outside influences and whatever's going on at home. I want to try to make them know that they can--for the eight hours they're here, they can at least separate themselves from any sort of problems or bad situations that they have at home. (Evan)

Evan makes no excuses for not allowing trauma, and "bad situations" deter from giving students the best education possible. Evan has an uncanny sense of obligation towards educating students and an understanding that trauma is an issue for both teacher and student. Evan is dedicated to making sure that the trauma from home does create an obstacle for teachers to provide the best education they can to all students in this school district.

Summary of Student/Teacher Trauma

Theme 3, student/teacher trauma demonstrated that primary trauma (teacher) and secondary trauma (student) co-exist in this school district. The inevitability that a teacher with a history of trauma will teach students who have been traumatized is the norm for this school district. This overlapping of trauma seemed to have had a positive effect both on compassion/job satisfaction and a teacher's motivation to provide the best education

possible. No assumptions were made from participants about a student's trauma and the unwillingness from the teacher to not provide the best education possible.

Emerging Story

The data analysis for this research study on compassion fatigue for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district gathered from the participating teachers showed three emerging themes: student/home-life, school, response to trauma, and teacher/student trauma. The emerging story of these themes found that teachers within this school district perceive their students as being traumatized and living in homes that are a deterrent to their academic and social health. Participants felt that trauma is the norm for students in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation. Students bring that trauma into school and at times teaching them can be difficult. Participants were frustrated but motivated in educating students in this school district.

With high rates of secondary trauma, the participants felt the school district was more reactive than proactive when dealing with student trauma and compassion fatigue. Participants felt that with a learning environment where student trauma is the norm, a concern for more training is needed as well as support staff to help identify the compassion fatigue and appropriate care for teachers as well as students.

Primary trauma can be an issue if the teacher has a history of trauma. Secondary trauma from students is the norm and causes an array of emotional issues. Both primary and secondary trauma overlap and were dealt with on a daily basis in classrooms in this school district.

As with the response by Fred, all the participants felt that students are dealing with highly emotional issues and they bring these emotions to school. School routines provide the safety that many of these highly emotional students need. At school, students can receive the emotional help they need to deal with their own primary trauma. As Fred stated:

> They know the school's a safe place. They know there's a routine. At home there might not be. (Fred)

Providing a safe school involves a support system to help identify and support the trauma that both teachers and students are dealing with. Ignoring all the bottled-up emotions will lead to situations that could be detrimental to students and teachers. A more proactive and positive approach to dealing with traumatized students and teachers need to be developed in this school district.

The participants were emotional in their responses about their students and the feeling of love for their students was evident. There was a sense of frustration in not being able to control the dire situations that some students live in and deal with. Compassion fatigue is an obvious issue with all participants. Being tired and frustrated as a result of the secondary trauma the participants deal with was a key finding. As Fred stated:

> You know, there's times that I go home and I cried on my wife, there's times I go home angry, there's times that I go home just completely exhausted. You know, but then again, it takes you right back to you have to ask yourself, "what am I doing here in this school?" and you tell yourself, "I'm helping these kids." (Fred)

Fred stated that, no matter the circumstances, caring is the priority. The availability to cope with their own feelings was not a priority instead of caring for their students.

> Just keep plugging away. One foot in front of the other. Never stop caring. Never stop caring about the kids. Never stop caring about your job, what you're here to do. Just keep moving forward. And just-- I tell myself all the time, "Hey man, I'm not doing it for anybody else but these kids. It's for the kids." (Fred)

The effect that home-life had on students was a response all participants were frustrated with. The feeling among the responses was that home-life inflicted trauma on students in this community, and students were often victims of trauma. The trauma eventually causes the teachers' emotional issues also. The following are several responses about the trauma inflicted on students from the home and how the participants felt about it.

Evan felt the biggest challenge as a teacher is controlling the outside influences that students have on them in this school district. Evan understood that home for some students in this community can be filled with trauma. Evan reiterated the emerging story that trauma has an immense effect on student learning.

> That's my biggest challenge-- trying to make sure that the kids are here to be educated and not have to worry about outside influences and whatever's going on at home. (Evan)

Although Evan does not have the intimate details of what students are facing at home, the frustration of how their trauma is affecting their learning is clear in the response. Evan is still motivated to provide the best education possible for all students.

The response by Evan demonstrates the direction of the emerging story: Teachers love and care for their students, but the trauma experienced in the students' homes creates

an insurmountable obstacle to student success. Evan welcomes the challenge of educating students from traumatic backgrounds and understands that the only control the school district has is when that student is in the classroom.

Fred is concerned about the lack of support the students in this school district have from home. The support for students is limited from their home situations.

> Look these kids don't have support at home. You do. You have somebody pushing you. At times you don't take advantage of it and that's very frustrating as a parent. And yet we see these kids out here that are starving for the support, wishing they had that support but don't. (Fred)

Amy cannot stop worrying about students as they leave for home. Amy echoed what the other participants in this research are feeling: Too often the situation that children go home to is worrisome for teachers. Teachers will take that worry home daily and the onset of compassion fatigue becomes an issue. Amy demonstrated a love and caring feeling for all students in this school district and continues to allow personal emotional issues foster.

> And then when I watch them go out the door I worry about them. Because I know some of them just don't go home or they're not loved. (Amy)

Amy's contribution to the emerging story is how trauma students are encountering at home is a detriment to their academic and social success but something that the classroom teacher has little control over. The frustration Amy felt in loving and wanting the best for students in this community is deterred by the traumatic experiences of home life.

The responses elude to a key finding in the data analysis and themes: Participants feel that the student's home life is a vital piece of the student's education and success. The participants felt they had no control over the student's home life. The participants

also felt that they had no control over the trauma inflicted on the students, yet the participants were feeling the secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue as a result.

Woven into the student home life finding was a frustration from the participants about how this school district handled support for trauma and compassion fatigue. Amy felt that this school district doesn't provide the tools needed to deal with emotional trauma.

> We just don't have those tools. We were taught so, as a district, I think knowing where to go talk to, but I think we need somebody now to talk to or somebody to listen, and then give us something to help us out. (Amy)

The subtheme of not having enough tools offered by this school district to help identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress is a concern for all participants. The concern for new teachers and their ability to survive school districts with high rates of student trauma was also a response heard throughout the data collection.

Respondents felt the lack of prevention for all employees to help with emotional trauma by this school district needs to be replaced by more training and support staff. Trauma is an issue in this community, and for the leadership and school district to continue to avoid addressing the issue is a concern that all participants had.

Evan echoed the concern felt that this school district did not provide enough tools to deal with trauma and secondary effects on teachers. The lack of tools offered by the school district to deal with the emotional trauma is something that needs to occur.

> Well, making everyone aware of what trauma is and how does it affect kids and what can we do as teachers because we can't just wave our wand and

> make it go away. But we need to have the tools that we can use to deal with it. (Evan)

There is a concern from participants about a lack of tools is part of the emerging story that is profound from all participants. The feeling that educational leaders and the school district need to offer support to help deal with primary trauma and secondary trauma was a major concern for all participants. All participants voiced frustration over how the student's trauma was affecting them personally with little or no support from this school district.

Evaluation of the Results

Key Findings

The key findings for this research study on compassion fatigue for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation found the following themes based upon the qualitative data analysis: student home-life, school response to trauma, teachers' perception towards students, academic success and trauma, and job satisfaction. The key findings found in this research study are as follows:

1. Students are living in traumatic situations and this trauma is affecting their learning and those who are educating them. The amount of trauma these students are suffering stems from all types of abuse, neglect, living conditions, lack of resources, lack of family structure.
2. Teachers who are educating the students in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district care and love their students but feel that the students' life outside of school is a detriment the students' success in school. Teachers feel

helpless at the time in educating their students based upon how the trauma their students deal with is too immense.

3. Teachers are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress and feel that this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district needs to do more to support them emotionally and deal with their compassion fatigue. The teachers at times felt that their trauma and compassion fatigue needed to be succumbed simply because the emotional health and education of their students is the priority.

The key findings are all grounded in student trauma and the effect that it has on teachers and students in this school district. Students live in homes where trauma is the norm, and they bring that trauma into this school district. Teachers are angered by the home-life these students live in. Teachers do not use a student's home as an excuse to deliver a remedial education; instead, they are motivated to give even more of themselves.

Teachers who are dealing with intense secondary trauma on a daily basis are suffering from compassion fatigue. Unfortunately, this school district has no formal identification and process for compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. Teachers fell that "dealing with it" is the norm and will use an informal support system among staff to help cope with compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress.

Unexpected Findings

This research study on compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation answered the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district?
2. How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being?
3. How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

The data analysis for this mixed methods research study found two unexpected findings. The first unexpected outcome for the data analysis research study was a high level of job satisfaction teachers have working in with highly emotional and traumatized students. Often teachers will risk their own emotional health in order to provide the best learning environment for their students. There was no resentment towards students who bring such traumatic and emotional issues into the classroom. Teachers felt strongly about their love for the students and cared for them to the best of their ability.

Teachers in this research study did not feel "sorry" for the situations their students live in. Instead, the teachers were more motivated to help students who came from homes where trauma was the norm succeed.

The second unintended finding/consequence was the outcome of job satisfaction. When conducting a research study on compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, the research design and results should mirror the negative consequences of the effect of

trauma on educators in this school district. A theme that was universal in all participant responses was how much they loved their job and students considering such grim circumstances.

All participants scored in the high range for secondary traumatic stress and an expected outcome would be a feeling of negativity and anger towards the school system and students for inflicting emotional trauma on the participants. In this research study that was not a finding and it was opposite. Although all participants were suffering high rates of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, there was no indication of negativity towards students. The love they have for their students was overwhelming in their responses.

Summary of Research Findings

This research study on compassion fatigue for this school district found that students are living in traumatic situations, which is affecting their learning and those teachers who are educating them. Those teachers who are educating students in these high trauma homes love their students but feel that life outside of school is a detriment to the success of their students. Teachers in this school district felt helpless at times in trying to help their students due to the environments their students live in. Due to the high rates of secondary traumatic stress the teachers are suffering has resulted in a situation where the teachers are choosing between their own mental health and the success of their students.

CHAPTER 5—CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This dissertation implemented an embedded case design to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the Professional Quality of Life survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district? (2) How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being? (3) How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

The results of this study on compassion fatigue for this school district developed the following three themes: student/home-life, school, response to trauma, and teacher/student trauma.

The findings demonstrated teachers felt strongly that their students were victims of the trauma and this was an obstacle to the students' emotional health and academic success. The teachers' love and care for their students and felt helpless at times to educate them due to the trauma experienced by students. Teachers felt this school district needs to provide more training and tools to identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress.

Discussion

The purpose of this research study on compassion fatigue to determine if compassion fatigue and secondary trauma was an issue with teachers in this school district. The goals of the research study were (1) determine the rates of compassion fatigue for educators working in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district; (2) determine what are the possible causes for compassion fatigue in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district; and (3) deter compassion fatigue and increase compassion satisfaction in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district.

Prevalence of Compassion Fatigue within the School District

The prevalence of compassion fatigue as measured by the ProQOL survey was almost 15%. Specifically, of the 74 participants who returned the survey, 11 participants scored in the "high" range for compassion fatigue scores. Six of these 11 participants were interviewed.

The qualitative data analysis of the interviews found that all six participants had an array of issues stemming from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. Interview participants were not immune to the student trauma that was brought into the classroom. A common response was how the participants felt that students and their home life directly affected the students' behavior and learning.

Catie demonstrated the deep emotional concerns teachers have for students in this school district and how compassion fatigue results from secondary traumatic stress. Catie does not attempt to leave the emotions at work because of the difficulty of worrying

about what might be happening to students at home. The day for Catie never ends as the emotional rollercoaster continues through the night. Compassion fatigue is not only highly prevalent in the life of Catie but also in the support needed to address compassion fatigue if not available by the school district.

> So it's not like I can turn that stuff off mentally in my mind and say, “Okay, that day is over with them. I'm going home and I'm just going to live my life at home and not thinking nothing of it.” But now I lay there at night and I'm tossing and I'm turning and I'm thinking "Oh God, I hope she's okay. I hope nobody is in that house with them. I hope she really isn't home alone. I wonder if I should have called Social Services or I should have told somebody." (Catie)

Catie alludes to the possibility of having to contact social services because something might happen to the students in the house. Calling local social services is an issue that other teachers in this school district contemplate daily. Having to call local social services is a highly emotional process, which only contributes to compassion fatigue. The response by Catie defines the roles that teachers in this school district have in educating children: a teacher, a counselor, a friend, a caretaker, and many other roles. Compassion fatigue is inevitable when the role of teaching extends to other parts of a student’s life.

Fred voiced frustration over students’ home life and how the lack of parental involvement contributes to the frustration in the student’s academic achievement.

> And I think if we had more involvement from home, the parents, the guardians would see what we are doing here and I think they would trust us more. So I think that's probably the biggest obstacle, it's just the lack of help from home. (Fred)

Catie responded about how the heartbreaking stories that some of the children talk about when they come to school. The response alludes to teachers’ perceptions about how

parents/guardians do very little for their children and their frustration in not being able to control that situation.

> Nobody reads to them. Nobody does anything for them. They're told to be quiet and it's out of my way kind of thing. Now the kids tell you a lot of stories when they come in from home and share what their mom and dads did and yes, it's heartbreaking sometimes. (Catie)

The teachers in this school district have highly emotional concerns for their students, and these emotional concerns result in some suffering compassion fatigue. The prevalence of compassion fatigue for teachers is significant and the participants' emotional health needs to be a concern for this school district. The interviewed participants often questioned how much secondary trauma from their students they could take. At times, the participants felt helpless in the home situations of their students.

Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Care, Access to Care, and Organizational Commitments to Well-being

The results of the interviews with teachers showed that teachers believed their emotional health was not a priority for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. The population of students being educated in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district brought immense emotional trauma to the classroom, and, unfortunately, there were no safeguards in place to identify and support compassion fatigue for teachers.

The interviewed teachers did not identify any currently adopted programs or procedures to help deal with compassion fatigue and emotional trauma. Furthermore, no artifacts were found regarding any policies or procedures that this school district used to

formally identify compassion fatigue. There was an overall feeling among the participants that the organization lacked a commitment to their well-being.

Fred stated how the emotional trauma suffered at work will often result in emotional breakdowns at home. Fred not only was emotionally exhausted but also had feelings of anger about the situations that students are having to deal with at home. The teachers' responses seem to demonstrate that this school district expects teachers to deal with the emotional trauma and compassion fatigue themselves. As Fred stated,

> You know, there's times that I go home and I cried on my wife, there's times I go home angry, there's times that I go home just completely exhausted. (Fred)

Fred's response demonstrates the lack of support the school district has in response to identifying and supporting compassion fatigue. Too often Fred has no other option than to take all the secondary trauma home and continue the cycle of anger and exhaustion. Fred needs more support from the school district to help deal with compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress.

Amy felt strongly that talking to another colleague about secondary trauma and compassion did little to help alleviate the emotional trauma. Amy felt that teachers in this school district need "something" in order to identify and support and compassion fatigue.

> We were taught so, as a district, I think knowing where to go talk to, but I think we need somebody now to talk to or somebody to listen, and then give us something to help us out. (Amy)

Amy alludes to previous training this school district provided but is adamant that more training is needed.

Evan's response demonstrated the concern he has for the inability of teachers to make the trauma "go away." Evan's response details how more tools are needed to help teachers deal with the emotional trauma and compassion fatigue.

> Well, making everyone aware of what trauma is and how does it affect kids and what can we do as teachers. We need to have the tools that we can use to deal with it. (Evan)

Evan reiterates the need for this school district to provide more tools to help deal with the secondary trauma students bring to the classroom. Evan is aware of the effect that trauma has on both student and teacher and realizes that making the trauma disappear is impossible.

In answering Research Question 2, the findings indicated that teachers were aware that they were suffering emotional trauma and compassion fatigue as a result of working with traumatized children. The teachers were not in denial about their own emotional health and felt that the school district needed to do more to identify and support compassion fatigue.

Self-Care

The interviewed participants believed that the emotional health of their students was the priority; self-care was not the priority. The participants often felt that self-care was not an option simply because the emotional issues being brought to the classroom by their students were too profound. These teachers knew and understood that the secondary traumatic stress they were suffering was causing them emotional issues, but the only self-care initiated was informal support systems with other teachers.

Formally seeking self-care to help deal with compassion fatigue was not an option that participants utilized. Those interviewed noted an informal support system utilizing colleagues as peer support when self-care was urgently needed. Priority for self-care for participants was supplanted by the concern for student academic success and emotional health.

Access to Mental Health Care

The interviewed teachers stated that there was limited to no access to mental health care for the teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation community. The participants felt that mental health care was not a priority simply because the access to mental health was limited. The teachers felt this school district did not prioritize mental health, and as a result, faculty and staff employed by the district had little access to mental health care.

There was an overall feeling from teachers in this school district that you “suck it up” and deal with it. Access to mental health care is primarily due to the rural isolation of this community. The unfortunate reality is a lack of mental healthcare providers willing to live and work in this rurally isolated, high-poverty Indian Reservation community, and teachers as well as others in the community cannot easily access mental healthcare services. Teachers rarely seek out formal help for compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress simply due to the lack of providers.

Organization Commitment to Well-being

Overall, the teachers interviewed shared a concern that this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation was not committing enough resources towards identifying and supporting compassion fatigue among its teachers. Unquestionably, students brought a vast amount of secondary traumatic stress into the classroom and participants voiced concern that despite the overwhelming levels of secondary traumatic stress, the school district did nothing to address the matter. This lack of action by this school district was interpreted by the teachers interviewed to demonstrate the lack of commitment to teachers' emotional well-being from this school district.

Catie was frustrated by this school districts' lack of commitment to well-being, especially with new teachers. Catie felt that when new teachers enter into employment, this school district is ineffective at preparing them emotionally to deal with the trauma the new teachers will encounter. The lack of resources and organizational commitment to identify and provide support systems to reduce compassion fatigue needs to be addressed according to Catie. As Catie states:

> A lot of times, I think, when new teachers come in, they're unprepared for our students. (Catie)

Dealing with it was feeling among other participants in this research study. Catie not only reiterates that dealing with it is not acceptable, but more tools need to be offered by this school district to help identify and support compassion fatigue.

Evan stated how the other teachers in the building provide emotional relief. These safe places are where emotional trauma can be discussed and informal emotional support offered by colleagues.

My colleague's classrooms, that's my safe place. That's where I go if I need support. (Evan)

The response by Evan reveals an informal support network that helps teachers cope with compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress in this school district. Teachers in this school district lean heavily on colleagues to help deal with the secondary trauma students bring to the classroom. Evan's response demonstrates his utilization of colleagues to help cope with compassion fatigue and provide emotional support.

The Role of Educational Leaders

In regard to Research Question 3, the findings demonstrate that educational leaders within this school district did little to help identify and support compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue was an issue, yet there was little support and safeguards offered by school administrators and local school board members to directly help teachers deal with compassion fatigue. No formal support structures were found that address teacher compassion fatigue, nor did any of the interviewed participants note interventions offered by school administrators.

Fred felt that the educational leaders did not provide any emotional support for the teachers in this school district. When asked about the emotional support provided to teachers by school leaders, Fred stated,

I don't think they provide a lot of emotional support. (Fred)

Fred felt that providing emotional support for compassion fatigue for teachers in this school district was not a priority.

Amy felt that the educational leaders need to offer a counselor specifically for teachers to identify and support compassion fatigue. Amy also felt that new teachers aren't coming into the profession because of the secondary emotional trauma teachers deal with. Not having a formal emotional support system was a concern from Amy.

> I think we need a counselor. I think we need time to go, I think we need some more tools, I think that's why some of the young kids aren't coming into teaching now. (Amy)

The recommendation for more tools to help identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress was stated by many of the interviewed participants. Amy was concerned with new teachers entering an educational environment where the emotional toll from student trauma is immense, and offering counselors more tools to combat emotional stress is needed.

Implications

The students on this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation face many difficult situations that result in trauma. Some of the situations include physical abuse, emotional abuse, parental domestic abuse, student and adult suicide, student attendance issues, and continual student behavioral issues that disrupt the classroom (Bregel, 2013). Teachers in this community will suffer secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue as a result from working with the students. This research study set forth to determine the prevalence of compassion fatigue among the teachers in this school district, the perceptions of those teachers with high levels of compassion fatigue, and whether those teachers considered educational leaders and organizations were committed to the teacher's emotional well-being.

Previous to this research study on compassion fatigue existing research regarding how schools and teachers in rurally isolated schools address and cope with compassion fatigue was limited. No research studies were found that address compassion fatigue in educators working in schools serving American Indian communities (National Native Children's Trauma Center, 2014).

Implication 1: The Lack of Employee Assistance Programs

This research found that employee assistance programs to help and support emotional concerns for teachers is non-existent. The research study found that teachers were suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary trauma but felt strongly that the school district was not doing enough to help them.

Most employee wellness programs for educators often are a result of alcohol drug/abuse, divorces, and financial issues. (Cohen et al., 2002). Employee wellness programs are conceived as rehabilitative versus preventative thus are often deemed as punitive. Seeking help for emotional issues such as compassion fatigue often stigmatize employees.

Teachers in this school district have informal wellness programs that help to offset the highly emotional issues they deal with. The teachers are often their own best support and survive by talking with each other.

This school district needs a more formal employee wellness program geared towards Native American communities, families, and students. The Camas Path Foundation developed and funded by the Kalispel Tribe of Nations has a mission to "Improve the physical, mental, and social wellness of our Tribal and community

members" (Kalispel Tribe of Nations, 2019, p. 2). This type of holistic approach that incorporates Native American values and seeks to treat the mind, heart, and soul might help to offset the high levels of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The Camas Path Behavioral Health Services Wellness Program developed by the Kalispel Tribe of Nations integrates Native American culture into the employee wellness programs (Kalispel Tribe of Nations, 2019). The investment the Kalispel Tribe of Nations has made into its employees is a consideration for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation and the local tribe.

Having employees who are suffering from compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress was a concern for all participants in this research study. There are no formal processes to help identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress for employees in this school district. Working with children who regularly encounter such traumatizing situations requires rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations to mandate employee wellness programs and trainings for all new and current employees.

A district funded employee assistance program that provides early identification and support for compassion fatigue needs to be a consideration for this school district. High trauma environments like rural, high-poverty Indian Reservations bring continual secondary trauma into the classroom.

In a recent report by The National Educational Association and the National Council of State Education Associations, recommendations were made to help improve the mental health of teachers who work in high trauma schools (Walker, 2019). The

report dispelled the stigma that somehow teachers who seek help for emotional issues such as secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue are selfish. The report demanded that employee wellness programs seeking to promote positive emotional support within schools must be the norm. This school district needs to develop an employee assistance program to help teachers who are working in these high trauma school settings.

Implication 2: Caring and Love Is Powerful

Positive school climates that foster morale and allow teachers to focus on educating students helps to deter compassion fatigue (Ollison, 2019). Teachers who are positive and genuinely care about their students are more motivated to find success in their students. A powerful theme found among all the participants was how dealing with such difficult students did not deter them from caring and loving them. The implication that caring teacher-student relations are important is simple yet profound in helping teachers fight through compassion fatigue and burnout.

Hughes (2001) found large numbers of teachers who suffer burnout do decide to stay in the profession but why? This research project found that teachers decide to put their own emotions at risk and fight through the secondary trauma that students bring into the classroom. The power of love and caring was determined to be a significant factor in why teachers decide to keep working in this school district.

The prevalence of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress impact a significant number of teachers within this school district as demonstrated by the results of the ProQOL survey. Additionally, the data also points to a finding that those participants

who suffer the most with compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress also overwhelmingly love and care for their students. The theme and subtheme of love and care was found in all participants' responses. The blame for the trauma from the standpoint of the interviewed teachers' perceptions begins and ends at the students' home; yet, the love and care the teachers in this school district have for their students is something the teacher can control.

Implication 3: High Trauma Locations Need More Emotional Support

This research study found that compassion fatigue is more likely to evolve when you work with children who are continually living in traumatic situations themselves and bringing that trauma to school. As demonstrated in the findings, teachers in this school district were aware that their students were suffering from traumatic situations outside the classroom. The teachers knew the extent of trauma for their students ranged from drug abuse to their parents being in jail. Community environments, like this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation community, need more preventative measures in place to help identify and support compassion fatigue. As Amy stated,

> I think they need to teach students or teachers that are coming into this about trauma and how to deal with it, not on just a student-level but on a teacher-level because it is tough. (Amy)

Recognizing early the following signs of compassion fatigue is a starting point for high trauma locations like this school district. Some of the sign are (1) exhaustion, (2) reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy, (3) anger and irritability, (4) increased use of alcohol and drugs, (5) a dread of working with certain students/families, (6) diminished sense of enjoyment as a teacher, (7) difficulty separating work life from

personal life, (8) more absenteeism from work, (9) problems with personal relationships, and (10) an impaired ability to make decisions for students (Mathieau, 2007).

The findings of this research study showed all the participants were suffering at least one of the signs of compassion fatigue. Early detection for compassion fatigue needs to be the norm for school districts who anticipate teaching children that are living in high trauma homes and bringing that trauma to school. Early detection utilizing the ProQOL survey could help school districts identify and support teachers who are working in highly traumatized environments.

Implication 4: Formal/Informal Peer Support Systems

Informal peer support systems for emotional support and compassion fatigue was an unexpected outcome and implication for this research study. As in most schools, a lack of peer support systems within the schools could have adverse effects on teachers (Davis & Palladino, 2011). This school district has an extensive informal peer system that teachers use in order to cope with compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.

Transitioning from an informal to formal peer support system needs to be developed in this school district. This school district needs to build a culture where teachers are openly supporting each other. A positive peer support network that infuses different levels of interventions such as small group support, staff teams, friendships, and counseling needs to be formalized (Gun, 2020). Allowing teachers to come together and offer support to each other in an open and positive direction allows for peer support to become a powerful tool.

Having a system that first allows for the identification of compassion fatigue using the ProQOL survey needs to be mandatory. The ProQOL survey will identify compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). The ProQOL survey can be administered by local educational leaders or counselors. The ProQOL manual provides guidelines on scoring and how to proceed based upon the ProQOL scores. Once the ProQOL survey is administered, an individual intervention plan can be formulated if needed.

The different levels of support would be: Level 1 would include peer support and mentoring; Level 2 would include support groups and leadership intervention; and Level 3 would include counseling and further diagnostic intervention. This school district would need to invest financially in all aspects of a formal peer support system. The different levels of support would be offered to all staff based upon their ProQOL scores.

Implication #4 found that teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District are using informal peer support systems to help combat and survive compassion fatigue. This Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district needs to utilize formal peer support systems to help identify and support compassion fatigue. Teachers should no longer feel a need to informally deal with compassion fatigue. This Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district needs to invest in a formal peer support program.

Implication #4 found that teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district have utilized an informal peer support system in order to survive

emotionally. This school district needs to develop a formal peer support system that gives teachers the comfort to deal with compassion fatigue.

Recommendations for Practitioners

The findings for this research study suggest the following recommendations for school districts to help identify and support teachers with compassion fatigue.

Recommendation 1: Recognizing That Compassion Fatigue Is an Issue

High trauma school districts similar to this school district need to come to grips with the impact that student trauma has on the district and its teachers. At times, emotional health for employees is not a priority for school districts. The problem that arises is student trauma and compassion fatigue have a major impact on the emotional health of the teachers. As Paccione-Dyszlewski (2016) stated:

> Trauma is personal. It does not appear if it not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated, the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams, healing can begin. (p. 8)

To begin healing, this school district needs to recognize that trauma is a formidable issue with students and teachers in this school district. Validating trauma and not ignoring it needs to be replaced with a learning environment that not only fosters the mental health of teachers but also provides financial sustainability. Teachers in this school district are suffering compassion fatigue from the intense student trauma they encounter daily, and for healing to begin the identification for compassion fatigue must happen.

Early identification of teachers who are heading towards the compassion fatigue warning zone is a key recommendation in this research study (Mathieau, 2013). The ProQOL survey used for this research study has been proven to be the premier tool for identifying compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. The ProQOL survey has a self-score and takes approximately 30 minutes to administer. The ProQOL survey is non-evasive and allows participants the confidentiality needed to feel safe in determining whether they are at risk for compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. Counselors or educational leaders in this school district would not administer the ProQOL survey but also report the scores to the individual teacher.

Recommendation 2: School Districts Provide Training for All Teachers

Too often compassion fatigue for school districts will go undetected and be allowed to fester. Amy reiterates how difficult working children who suffer immense trauma can be. As Amy states:

> Maybe that's the thing. I can't save them. So it's hard. (Amy)

Amy is a 25-year veteran teacher who has given her career to working with Native American children in rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation school districts. School districts who have a high population of traumatized students cannot afford to let their teachers continue to suffer from compassion fatigue. The recommendation for school districts to adopt self-help manuals and mandate compassion fatigue and secondary trauma trainings for all teachers. Kurzman (2013) provides key guidance in that identifying and supporting compassion fatigue and secondary trauma needs to be viewed from a social standpoint and less from a medical standpoint.

Trainings must be offered at the inception of each school year. Online/onsite trainings such as the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Substance Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or local experts in the field can be utilized for the trainings. Targeting and following up with new teachers for compassion fatigue is vitally important. Most local school districts have professional in-service days that local school boards and administration can utilize for trainings on compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress.

The ProQOL manual/website (www.proqol.com) has several valuable resources and training materials for meeting the needs of compassion fatigue for teachers. The ProQOL website offers readymade PowerPoint presentations for local administrators/districts to train their teachers on what compassion fatigue is and how to identify and support it.

Recommendation 3: Improve Employee Wellness Programs

Currently, this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District has a policy that addresses student wellness and good health. Policy 2510 demands that the school district develop a Health and Wellness Leadership Council devoted to the following: Student mental health; Access to health care; Employee health and wellness; Professional development for teachers about health and wellness. Although this policy is well developed the intent is for students only. The local collective bargaining agreement demands little to identify and support the emotional needs of the teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district.

Currently, this school district has no formal wellness procedure to identify and support compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. The findings for this research project demonstrated that improvements in employee wellness programs are needed. Mental health with employee assistance is often overlooked (Buck et al., 2003). A teacher admitting they are suffering from compassion fatigue often brings shame and embarrassment. Model employee wellness programs need to include a reliable diagnostic tool, confidentiality, local school board approval, yearly trainings, a meeting space, and support staff.

The feeling among some teachers in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation is to lean on one another for support. Although this is a common strategy for teachers to deal with compassion fatigue in this school district, a more formal and developed employee wellness policy that addresses compassion fatigue needs to be developed. This school district has an obligation to teachers to provide emotional support for compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.

Evan’s response is common with all participants in how teachers utilize each other for emotional support.

> My colleague's classrooms, that's my safe place. That's where I go if I need. (Evan)

Employing the Professional Quality of Life Survey to new employees and current employees on a yearly basis should be the first step in developing a thorough and sustainable wellness program. This school district needs to be more proactive in helping their teachers identify and support compassion fatigue and rely less on each other for emotional support.

Amy recommended that this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district hire a counselor specifically for teachers and staff.

We need a counselor. (Amy)

The recommendation for an adult counselor can be feasible for some school districts. Contracting a counselor for a day a week or bi-weekly to meet with staff about compassion fatigue and their emotional issues and administer support groups is an option that has been successful.

Recommendation 4: Formal/Informal Peer Support Systems

Informal peer support systems for emotional support and compassion fatigue was an unexpected outcome and implication for this research study. As in most schools, a lack of peer support systems within the schools could have adverse effects on teachers (Davis & Palladino, 2011). This school district has an extensive informal peer system that teachers use in order to cope with compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.

Transitioning from an informal to formal peer support system needs to be developed in this school district. This school district needs to build a culture where teachers are openly supporting each other. A positive peer support network that infuses different levels of interventions such as small group support, staff teams, friendships, and counseling needs to be formalized (Gun, 2020). Allowing teachers to come together and offer support to each other in an open and positive direction allows for peer support to become a powerful tool.

Having a system that first allows for the identification of compassion fatigue using the ProQOL survey needs to be mandatory. The ProQOL survey will identify

compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). The ProQOL survey can be administered by local educational leaders or counselors. The ProQOL manual provides guidelines on scoring and how to proceed based upon the ProQOL scores. Once the ProQOL survey is administered, an individual intervention plan can be formulated if needed.

The different levels of support would be Level 1 would include peer support and mentoring, Level 2 would include support groups and leadership intervention, and Level 3 would include counseling and further diagnostic intervention. This school district would need to invest financially in all aspects of a formal peer support system. The different levels of support would be offered to all staff based upon their ProQOL scores.

Implication #4 found that teachers in this school district are using informal peer support systems to help combat and survive compassion fatigue. This school district needs to utilize formal peer support systems to help identify and support compassion fatigue. Teachers should no longer feel a need to informally deal with compassion fatigue. This school district needs to invest in a formal peer support program.

Implication #4 found that teachers in this school district have utilized an informal peer support system in order to survive emotionally. This school district needs to develop a formal peer support system that gives teachers the comfort to deal with compassion fatigue. The lack of systemic peer support systems can have an adverse effect on teachers (Davis & Palladino, 2011), and a fully functional peer support system can be beneficial to all teachers.

Recommendation 5: Teachers Should Not Have to Risk Their Own Emotional Health

The connection between compassion fatigue, burnout, and teacher turnover should be a concern for all school districts in high trauma areas like this school district. The findings suggest that teachers in this school district will drive themselves into the ground trying to educate, love, and care for their students. As Sizemore (2016) stated, “Excessive dedication and perfectionism are all key components that eventually can lead to burnout” (p. 1). The findings demonstrated that the teachers were giving every ounce of their ability and effort in trying to do what was best for their students.

Fred details how they love their students and everything is geared towards helping and educating them. Fred would give every ounce of his energy, love, compassion, and caring for the students. Fred has an even deeper motivation for student success and well-being for students in this school district. Fred would not only burn himself out in trying to educate and care for students but would risk personal emotional health for the betterment of students in this school district.

> Everything I do is for these kids. So that's of how I deal with-Just keep reminding me, myself, you know "Who you here for?” The kids and that gets me through. Cause I love these kids. I really do. (Fred)

Without a formal local school board adopted employee assistance program for compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic teachers working in high trauma areas like this, the school district will continue to be at high risk for burnout. Their caring and love for their students simply do not allow them to leave their emotions at the school doorstep and detach emotionally from the trauma of their students. The research found that teachers are having to choose between their own personal emotional health or educating their students to the best of their ability. All participants in this research study were putting their own mental health at risk and putting their students first. Unfortunately, by

not addressing their own mental health and compassion fatigue, the possibility for burnout needs to be a concern for this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district.

Recommendations for Further Research

The methodology used for this research study was an embedded case design. The range scores of the quantitative data (ProQOL survey) were used to formulate the interview pool (qualitative data). The data was collected via Survey Monkey and range scores determined. One procedural adjustment is to either change or add the interview questions to address research question #3: What do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue? The interview question to help validate this research question was: Describe your feeling towards educational leaders in supporting your concerns about compassion fatigue?

The data analysis found that the participants addressed this question on how they feel about educational leaders supporting compassion fatigue very cautiously. It is understood that the question has some critique of educational leaders and the concern from the teacher might be the unwillingness to come forth about their feelings about their superiors.

Adjusting the question(s) would help with teachers and their responses about how they feel about critiquing their superior. Although the research question on how educators feel about the role educational leaders have in helping to identify and support compassion

fatigue is well-intended and the outcomes valuable the concern is how forthcoming the teachers are in their responses.

Another procedural adjustment is to include a possible research study question on compassion satisfaction. Compassion satisfaction is the idea that you are emotionally stable in your profession and you are able to fulfill the duties of the job (Hudnall-Stamm, 2013). Mindfulness and self-regulation are two important concepts that help regulate compassion satisfaction (Martin-Cuellar et al., 2018).

An unexpected finding in this research study was an overwhelming feeling that teachers love working at this school district. This research study set forth no research question or interview question about compassion satisfaction, yet the data analysis found that compassion satisfaction was a very high level in this school district. Future research might explore the notion of compassion satisfaction further and its relationship to compassion fatigue and employee burnout.

The participants in this research study were all teachers in this school district. The only demographic designation for the interview participants was they had to currently be a teacher in this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district. In replicating this research study, one variable to change is expanding the participating schools and participants. This school district is located in a rural, high-poverty location. Expanding the research study to include local school districts with similar demographics is one possibility. Another possibility would be to conduct a quantitative study using the ProQOL survey to establish the prevalence of compassion fatigue among teachers in

schools serving American Indian communities across the United States or regions of the country.

Lastly, the data collection was grounded in using the Professional Quality of Life Survey and developing an interview pool based on the range scores for compassion fatigue from the ProQOL results. A recommendation for this research study is to collect varying demographic data such as years of experience, educational level, ethnicity, and level of college experience and select participants based on that demographic data.

Conclusion

A gap exists between what is known about compassion fatigue and in understanding the extent to which educators on this rural, high-poverty Indian Reservation community experience compassion fatigue. The purpose of this research study is to determine the extent to which teachers in this school district experience compassion fatigue, determine the teachers' perceptions of the effects of student trauma on their well-being, and understand the educators' perceived barriers to improving their well-being.

This research study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the prevalence of compassion fatigue as determined by the ProQOL survey for teachers at this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School District? (2) How do teachers within the Northern Rockies Indian Reservation school district perceive self-care, access to mental health care, and organizational commitments to well-being? (3) How do educators within a Northern Rockies Indian Reservation perceive as important the role of educational leaders in helping identify and support compassion fatigue?

The themes developed from the data analysis for this research study were student home-life; school response to trauma; and teacher/student trauma. The key findings from qualitative data analysis were students are living in high trauma environments, students are bringing that trauma to school teachers are directly or indirectly dealing with that trauma, and this Northern Rockies Indian Reservation needs to find a formal process to identify and supporting compassion fatigue. As Fred stated:

> In terms of emotional support, in terms of fatigue, I don't think the district really offers that. (Fred)

Children who attend this school district have trauma passed from generations. Many children will continue to suffer ACES and trauma due to the environment they live in. Teachers in school districts with children who come from high trauma environments will continue to experience secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. School districts owe it to their employees to provide support for compassion fatigue. School districts need to come to grips with the realities of high trauma levels among significant proportions of their students and respond to the struggles their teachers are having with emotional issues. The need is to identify and support teachers who are suffering from compassion fatigue. Such support cannot continue to be overlooked.

Teachers in this school district need to feel comfortable knowing policies and procedures are in place to help identify and support compassion fatigue. The need to deal with it “on your own” needs to be replaced by school districts that are proactive in addressing the well-being of both students and teachers. Student trauma in this school district, like all high trauma locations, will continue to deal with abuse, suicide, death, and family displacement, and all that filters into local schools and the classroom. The

impossibility of emotional separation between personal and professional activities is best conveyed by Catie in stating:

> So it's not like I can turn that stuff off mentally in my mind and say, “Okay, that day is over with them. I'm going home and I'm just going to live my life at home and not thinking nothing of it.” (Catie)

Teachers in this school district are more than just teachers—they are friends, caretakers, counselors, guardians, and coaches.

The question and concern is: Who is taking care of the emotional concerns and needs teachers have? This research study determined the current prevalence of compassion fatigue and the perceptions of the teachers most impacted by compassion fatigue within a single district serving an American Indian Reservation community. There is nothing to suggest that the experiences of teachers regarding compassion fatigue at this school district are significantly different than other such school districts serving similar communities. If things are to change, district-level leaders at this school district and at other districts serving similar communities must address the issue of compassion fatigue locally and push for systemic reform throughout Indian education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age: ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ Above 66

2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Race/Ethnicity:

☐ Black/African American

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native

☐ Asian

☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Other

4. Relationship Status:

☐ Married

☐ Single

☐ In a relationship

☐ Other

5. Years of experience as an educator:

☐ 0-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 21-25

☐ 26-30

☐ 31-35

☐ 36-40

☐ Above 40

6. Highest level of education achieved:

☐ High School Diploma/GED

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctoral Degree

☐ Other

7. On a scale of 0 (none) to 5 (5 or more), how many traumatic events have you personally experienced in your lifetime? Traumatic events are violent deaths of family members; Unexpected deaths of family members/students; Terminally ill family members/students; Torture; Terrorist Attack; Military Combat; Domestic assault; Suicide

☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5 or more

8. Approximately how often do you deal with students' trauma? This could be talking to a student about it, hearing about it, witnessing it, or hearing another student talk about.

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Never

APPENDIX B

IRB MSU

Appendix B

IRB MSU

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
For the Protection of Human Subjects
FWA 00000165

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Chair: Mark Quinn
406-994-4707
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Cheryl Johnson
406-994-4706
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Keith Erickson and William Ruff

FROM: Mark Quinn
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

DATE: December 12, 2019

RE: *"Compassion Fatigue: The Cost of Caring in an American Indian School Community" [KE121219-EX]*

The above research, described in your submission of December 6, 2019, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

____ (b) (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

__X__ (b) (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation; and (iii) the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by section 16.111(a)(7).

____ (b) (3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

____ (b) (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

____ (b) (5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

____ (b) (6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.

APPENDIX C

IRB FORT PECK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Fort Peck Institutional Review Board
For the Protection of Human Subjects
FWA00019355

Fort Peck Community College
Box 398
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406-768-5555

Chair: Robert McAnally
406-768-8377
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Administrator: Joy Toavs
406-768-5555
jtoavs@fpcc.edu

MEMORANDUM

TO: Keith Erickson

FROM: Robert McAnally
Chair, Fort Peck Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 12, 2019

RE: Compassion Fatigue:The Cost of Caring In An American Indian School Community

The above research, described in your submission of December 6, 2019, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

____ (b) (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

__X__ (b) (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

____ (b) (3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

____ (b) (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

____ (b) (5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

_____ (b) (6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO USE PROQOL

Permission to Use the ProQOL

Thank you for your interest in using the Professional Quality of Life Measure (ProQOL). Please share the following information with us to obtain permission to use the measure:

Please provide your contact information:

Email Address

keith.erickson@poplarschools.com

Name

Keith Erickson

Organization Name, if applicable

MSU Bozeman

Country

USA

Please tell us briefly about your project:

A research study on an Indian Reservation School in Northeast Montana. Looking to find rates of burnout and fatigue.

What is the population you will be using the ProQOL with?

Teacher and Admin

In what language/s do you plan to use the ProQOL?

Listed here are the languages in which the ProQOL is currently available (see https://proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html). If you wish to use a language not listed here, please select "Other" and specify which language/s.

English

The ProQOL measure may be freely copied and used, without individualized permission from the ProQOL office, as long as:

- **You credit The Center for Victims of Torture and provide a link to www.ProQOL.org;**
- **It is not sold; and**
- **No changes are made, other than creating or using a translation, and/or replacing "[helper]" with a more specific term such as "nurse."**

Note that the following situations are acceptable:

You can reformat the ProQOL, including putting it in a virtual format
You can use the ProQOL as part of work you are paid to do, such as at a training: you just cannot sell the measure itself

Does your use of the ProQOL abide by the three criteria listed above? (If yes, you are free to use the ProQOL immediately upon submitting this form. If not, the ProQOL office will be in contact in order to establish your permission to use the measure.)

Yes

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title Compassion Fatigue: The Cost of Caring In an American Indian School Community

You are being asked to participate and be interviewed in a research study that explores rates of compassion fatigue for educators.

Rationale of Research

The purpose of this study is to determine how compassion fatigue and the perceived lack of support for compassion fatigue has affected you. The knowledge gained from this study may lead to understanding of how schools can identify compassion fatigue rates and the development of support systems for compassion fatigue for school districts.

Your Selection for Participation

The selection for this interview was based upon your score on the Professional Quality of Life Survey. You were selected based upon your scoring in the 'high' range for compassion fatigue. All participants in this study will receive the same set of interview questions.

Procedures

Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate you will be asked a set of interview questions regarding your perceptions of self-care, access to mental health resources and the degree of support offered by the school district where you are employed. You can choose to not answer any questions and you can stop at any time. The interviews will be conducted on-site at Poplar School District. The interviews will be conducted by an interviewer not affiliated or employed by the school district in order to maintain integrity of the interview data. The interview should take on the average 30-45 minutes.

Risks

There are no foreseen risks.

Benefits

The study is of no direct benefit to you.

Alternatives Available

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please simply state that you do not want to participate. Additionally, should you decide to participate in the interview, and later change your mind, please notify the interviewer and your responses will be removed from the database.

Source of Funding

NA

Cost to Participate

None

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this research project you may contact me, Keith M. Erickson, at on my cell phone (406-768-7610) at any time. You may also contact the chairman of my doctoral committee Dr. William Ruff, (406) 994-4182 (wruff@montana.edu). Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the MSU Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707 (mquinn@montana.edu).

Confidentiality

Results from participation in these interviews are coded and are confidential. No identification of participants will be used in analyzing data. Published results from this study will not include any information that may be used to identify participants. All interview recordings and transcripts are kept under lock and key.

Your Participation in this Research is Voluntary

You are free to stop participating in this study at any time. You may simply stop with the interview. Any incomplete interviews will be dropped from collected data. You may ask me about the research procedures and I will answer your questions to the best of my ability.

Incentive

Each participant/interviewee will receive a $20.00 gift card.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. By pressing the "I Agree" button at the

bottom of this page, I agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signed:_____

Investigator:_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title Compassion Fatigue: The Cost of Caring In An American Indian School Community

You are being asked to participate in a research study that explores rates of compassion fatigue for educators.

Rationale of Research

The purpose of this study is to determine the rates of compassion fatigue for teachers. The knowledge gained from this study may lead to understanding of how schools can identify compassion fatigue rates and the development of support systems for compassion fatigue for school districts.

Your Selection for Participation

You were chosen for this research study because you are currently a certified teacher at Poplar Public School District.

Procedures

Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a survey that consists of 30 short questions. You can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. The Professional Quality of Life Survey is distributed through the online survey company Survey Monkey. Completion of the survey should take about 20 minutes or less. Based on the results of your completed survey you make be asked to participate in an interview to further explore your perceptions of self-care and the support you are provided by the school district.

Risks

There are no foreseen risks.

Benefits

The study is of no direct benefit to you.

Alternatives Available

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please simply delete this email.

Source of Funding

NA

Cost to Participate

None

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this research project you may contact me, Keith M. Erickson, at on my cell phone (406-768-7610) at any time or Dr. William Ruff, (406) 994-4182 (wruff@montana.edu). Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the chair of the MSU Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707 (mquinn@montana.edu).

Confidentiality

Results from participation in this survey are coded and are confidential. No identification of participants (i.e. email addresses) will be used in analyzing data. Published results from this study will not include any information that may be used to identify specific participants.

The Survey Monkey program keeps track of email addresses that have completed the survey. If you choose to participate, you will be contacted by email to thank you for your participation and to ask if you would like the results of the study upon project completion. Once this phase of the project is completed the email records will be deleted.

Your Participation in this Research is Voluntary

You are free to stop participating in this study at any time. You may simply stop taking the survey. Any incomplete surveys will be dropped from collected data. You may ask me about the research procedures and I will answer your questions to the best of my ability.

Incentive

No incentive is being offered for participation.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. By pressing the "I Agree" button at the bottom of this page, I agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Tell me why you decided to become an educator?

2. Tell me about an average day of work.

    -What makes you feel most satisfied?

    -What does that situation look like?

    -Do those situations occur often?

    -What, if anything, can you do to facilitate such situations?

3. Tell me about how you balance your personal or family needs and the demands of teaching or your professional obligations.

    - How difficult is it for you to keep the two balanced?

    -What does the perfect balance look like?

    -What does the balance look like in a typical day or week?

4. Tell me about the difference you are making in your students.

    -Provide an example or two of how you made a difference with a student

    -How did you feel about the difference you made?

    -How often do you make a difference?

5. Describe how working with students who have traumatic experiences affects you.

    -Do you feel that you can absorb their trauma?

    -Does the trauma students bring to the classroom have a profound effect on you?

    -Do you feel that the secondary trauma students bring can be regulated by teachers?

6. How might the traumatic experiences of the students you educate be affecting your

emotional health?

-Do you feel that you are being effected by your student's trauma?

-Can you leave your emotions at school or do you take them home?

-Do you think the district does enough to support teacher's emotional health?

7. What is the most important information you want me to take away from this interview?

-What questions should I have asked but didn't?

TABLES

Table 1

Employment/Unemployment Rates for Montana's Indian Reservations

Montana Reservation	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Blackfeet	51.2	48.8
Crow	43.6	56.4
Fort Belknap	36.3	63.7
Fort Peck	50.7	49.3
Northern Cheyenne	43.5	46.5
Rocky Boy	46.7	53.3
Salish-Kootenai	50.1	49.9

(Montana Department of Labor, 2015)

Table 2

Northern Rockies Indian Reservation School Demographic Data

Demographic	Number	Total Native American
Teachers	109	53
Administration	9	4
Students	964	926
Low-Income Students	964	926
Special Education Students	203	197

(K. Erickson, personal communication, January 4, 2020).

Table 3

Federal Income Eligibility Income Chart: Free and Reduced

Household Size	Yearly Income	Monthly Income
1	$23,107	$1,926
2	$31,284	$2,607
3	$39,461	$3,289
4	$47,638	$3,970
5	$55,815	$4,652

(State of Montana, 2018)

Table 4

S*econdary Trauma Stress-ProQOL survey*

The Sum of My Secondary Trauma Questions is:	So My Score Equals	And My Secondary Trauma Level is:
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Table 5

Burnout Scores-ProQOL survey

The Sum of My Burnout Questions is:	So My Score Equals	And My Burnout Level is:
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Table 6

Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Years of Experience	Education Level
Amy	50-55	F	Caucasian	30-35	Masters
Barb	50-55	F	Caucasian	20-25	Masters
Catie	45-50	F	Sioux	20-25	Bachelors
Darci	45-50	F	Caucasian	5-10	Bachelors
Evan	40-45	M	Caucasian	20-25	Bachelors
Fred	35-40	M	Sioux	10-15	Bachelors

(K. Erickson, personal communication, July 15, 2020).

Table 7

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scores-ProQOL Survey

The Sum of My Secondary Traumatic Questions are:	And My Secondary Stress Score Level is:
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Table 8

Burnout Scores-ProQOL Survey

The Sum of My Burnout Questions is:	And My Burnout Level is:
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

(Hudnall-Stamm, 2013)

Table 9

Participant ProQOL Scores

	Satisfaction Score	Burnout Score	Secondary Stress Score
	Total	Total	Total
Amy	38	30	34
Barb	33	30	34
Catie	29	35	35
Darci	47	33	36
Evan	28	33	36
Fred	48	42	43