

Compassion Burnout



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Reproductive endocrinology infertility (REI) nurses providing assisted reproductive technology (ART) care and treatments must perform clinical care, patient education, and psychosocial support. While REI physicians have intensive fellowships in the field, REI nurses lack formal training. Nursing programs do not prepare RNs or mid-level practitioners for a career in reproductive medicine. Therefore, IVF nurses typically must learn enough embryology, andrology, gynecology, obstetrics and genetics to

guide their patients through the maze of testing and treatment options while on the job.

Due to the complex nature of ART services, nurses must also be well-versed in psychosocial techniques in order to support their patients through procedures and processes that inevitably evoke stress and depression. While some IVF practices and clinics offer in-house mental health support, most do not, and the stress felt by patients is often first shared with the IVF nurse. Without awareness or effective coaching, the REI nurse can become overwhelmed by symptoms of compassion fatigue, or in more extreme situations, compassion burnout.

This presentation will explore the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout and identify the conditions that lead to their development. The presentation will also discuss strategies that can be implemented in the workplace to mitigate the negative effects that can compromise the quality of both work and life for the IVF nurse.