

International Meeting on

TRADITIONAL & ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

July 23-24, 2018 | Osaka, Japan

Empathy and Practitioner Burnout: How to have a happy sustainable practice

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Practitioner burnout is becoming a common topic of discussion in alternative medicine as well as conventional medicine. The practitioner's capacity for empathy has been postulated to be both the cause of, and inoculation against burnout. As practitioners, we are taught to practice occupational health and safety procedures regarding physical contamination, but none are taught regarding emotional, mental or spiritual contamination. Such procedures would go a long way toward preventing certain types of burnout. Many traditional, complementary, alternative and integrative approaches spend significant time on in-depth interviewing of the patient, learning the details of their histories and in many cases their trauma history. Empathic practitioners who spend time listening to the trauma stories of their clients can sustain secondary traumatic stress. On an energetic level, the stories appear to lodge in the practitioner's energy field in specific locations according to their compatible resonance. As the practitioner's energy field fills with such they become saturated and burnout ensues. Several energy practices for preventing secondary traumatic stress will be presented,

and approaches to treating severe burnout will be discussed.



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