

Caring Safely®

Signs and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue The Wellness Gauge

Signs and Symptoms

- The Signs and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue
- Professional Quality of Life Scale
- The Silencing Response
- Your Warning Signs

Behavioral Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Increased use of negative coping strategies (alcohol, food, shopping, drugs, tv/net)
- Absenteeism
- Sleep disturbances
- Nightmares
- Starting arguments
- Compromised care of clients
- Avoidance of clients
- Loosing/misplacing things

Physical Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Exhaustion
- Headaches/Stomachaches
- Tension in Body
- Insomnia
- Impaired Immune System
- Agitation

Spiritual Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Questioning the meaning of life
- Lack of self-satisfaction
- Anger at God
- Loss of purpose
- Pervasive hopelessness
- Questioning prior religious beliefs

Interpersonal Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Withdrawn
- Mistrust
- Impact on parenting (protectiveness)
- Intolerance
- Decreased interest in intimacy or sex
- Isolation from friends/family/ colleagues
- Projection of anger or blame
- Loneliness

Emotional Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Powerlessness
- Guilt
- Survivor Guilt
- Numbness
- Helplessness
- Emotional Rollercoaster
- Depleted
- Anxiety
- Anger/Rage
- Shutdown
- Fear
- Sadness
- Overwhelmed
- Loss of Hope

Cognitive Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Difficulty concentrating
- Distracted/Feeling Spacey
- Preoccupation with trauma
- Rigidity
- Negative self-talk
- Perfectionism
- Heightened anxiety/irrational fears
- Confusion
- Decrease self-esteem
- Intrusive thoughts/images trauma
- Whirling thoughts
- Self-doubt
- Minimization
- Difficulty separating personal and professional lives.

Work Related Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Decreased feeling of work competence
- Increased transference/ counter-transference
- The Silencing Response
- Too tired for professional Development
- Thinking about leaving the field
- Dread of working with certain clients
- Diminished sense of purpose
- Less enjoyment with career
- Not taking vacation days/too many
- Hard to see the wins

The Silencing Response

“the silencing response [...] inability to attend to the stories/ experiences of our clients and instead to redirect the material that is less distressing for the professional.”

“This occurs when client’s experiences/stories are overwhelming, beyond our scope of comprehension and desire to know, or simply spiraling past our sense of competency. The point at which we may notice our ability to listen becoming compromised is the point at which the Silencing Response has weakened our clinical efficacy”

(Baranowsky, 1997)

Examples of the Silencing Response

- Changing the subject
- Minimizing client distress
- Boredom
- Using humor to change or minimize the Subject
- Fearing what the client has to say
- Blaming clients for their experience
- Avoiding the topic
- Wishing or suggesting the client would “just get over it”
- Angry or sarcastic with the client
- Faking interest or listening (hard to pay attention)
- Fearing you will not be able to help
- Not believing clients

(Baranowsky, 1997)

The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction

Burnout

Secondary Traumatic Stress (Compassion Fatigue)

Handout

Worksheet Two Signs and Symptoms

Compassion Fatigue Signs and Symptoms Check List

- As you work through Caring Safely content and strategies, you may want to address the category you are showing greatest signs and symptoms in.
- When you're ready, please START SMALL and reflect on:
 - What category has higher signs
 - What is something you used to do (or would like to try) that would provide nourishment in this category)
 - What is the smallest amount of activity you can commit to trying in the next week – this may simply be thinking about these questions.

Worksheet Three Warning Signs

The more awareness you build around your warning signs, the earlier you can use your strategies to reduce any signs and symptoms.

As you increase awareness, you will notice earlier and earlier warning signs.

You will often hear me say this about healing/growth/change, *"It's gonna get weird, before it gets better"*.

Caring Safely®

The Wellness Gauge
Breath Work – Audio Downloads

The Wellness Gauge

- The primary framework for developing a personalized Sustainable Caring practice:
The Wellness Gauge
- Your **downloadable audio practices** for Module One
 - Using your breath for relaxation
 - Using your breath for energy

The Wellness Gauge

- **The key to really defining wellness is to look at how your whole body feels and behaves at different levels.**
- Body, thoughts, mood, relationship, sleep, food
- Describe different levels of wellness:
 - Abundance
 - 8-10
 - 4-7
 - 1-4
- Now you have a way to measure the impact of the choices you make, and strategies you use, each day.



Putting it into practice

Putting Caring Safely into practice:

- Use your wellness gauge to identify your different levels of wellness. This may change over time as you learn more about yourself. Don't let perfectionistic tendencies keep you from completing the well as you can adapt it later.
- You don't have to make any changes right away, simply start to track your well from morning, day, evening and night.
- If you don't have a day planner with your daily activities written out, you may want to start noting what is happening in the morning, day, evening and night to start to seeing the connecting between certain activities/experiences and your well.
- Try one of the downloadable audio practice from this module and see how it impacts the well.

Audio Practices

Using your breath to impact your body:

- There are two short (three minutes) guided breathing practices in this module
- The first one is a three minute breathing practice for energy. This is a short breathing practice that should help you increase your energy when you're feeling sluggish, tired, low motivation, procrastination.
- The second one is a three minute breathing practice for relaxation. This one is to help your body relax when you're feeling stressed or anxious or agitated. This can also be a nice practice to use as soon as you get into bed to help you relax and sleep. If you wake in the middle of the night, with racing thoughts, try this practice as soon as you can to promote relaxation and focus the mind on the breath.
- These are designed to be short practices so that you can realistically add them to your day/evening, regardless of how busy your schedule is.