

Caring Safely®

Sustainable Caring: What's next?

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Sustainable Caring

- Developing a Sustainable Caring practice will take time and will evolve over time.
- What you do now, in the early stages of recovery and resilience, will allow you to deepen your personal awareness and set you up for more strategies in the future.
- Continuing to monitor your well and you inputs/outputs will allow you to see the impacts of various choices/strategies that will help you decide which ones to keep and which ones to let go of.
- Sustainable Caring comes from the process of adding inputs, reducing outputs and protecting yourself from vicarious trauma/emotional contagion.

Increasing Inputs, Decreasing Outputs

If you don't attend to your own needs, who will?

Can you reframe nourishment for yourself as something that is also beneficial for those you care for?

Warren Buffett [quote](#) *"When I was sixteen, I had just two things on my mind - girls and cars. I wasn't very good with girls. So I thought about cars. I thought about girls, too, but I had more luck with cars. Let's say that when I turned sixteen, a genie had appeared to me. And that genie said, 'Warren, I'm going to give you the car of your choice. It'll be here tomorrow morning with a big bow tied on it. Brand-new. And it's all yours.' Having heard all the genie stories, I would say, 'What's the catch?' And the genie would answer, 'There's only one catch. This is the last car you're ever going to get in your life. So it's got to last a lifetime.' If that had happened, I would have picked out that car. But, can you imagine, knowing it had to last a lifetime, what I would do with it? I would read the manual about five times. I would always keep it garaged. If there was the least little dent or scratch, I'd have it fixed right away because I wouldn't want it rusting. I would baby that car, because it would have to last a lifetime. That's exactly the position you are in concerning your mind and body. You only get one mind and one body. And it's got to last a lifetime. Now, it's very easy to let them ride for many years. But if you don't take care of that mind and that body, they'll be a wreck forty years later, just like the car would be. It's what you do right now, today, that determines how your mind and body will operate ten, twenty, and thirty years from now."*

Value Based Living

- Personal growth comes from consistent, intentional actions. Most people aren't able to quickly reflect on their life and say they are living a value based life. Most people don't stop to reflect on their values or evaluate how their choices/actions/behaviors line up with those values.
- One of the gifts of compassion fatigue is that it motivated you enough to explore a new way of caring and a new way of living, one that is aligned with your values.
- Also, personal growth is hard. We may begin with excitement and motivation in the beginning, but almost certainly, life will throw you a hurdle and it's difficult to maintain that motivation during stressful events in life.

Your Ideal Day

- You have already listed your values and now we want to ignite them even more, so that they can sustain you during the ups and downs of change.
- **Activity: Your ideal day in two years:**
 - A Workday
 - Extreme detail of that day
 - What you're doing, how you're doing it, who is around, how do you feel.
 - What brings you the most joy
 - What is missing now
 - Work backwards from two years – what small goals can you start setting now to achieve that ideal life?

Personalize and Integrate with Handout

Passion Projects

- How can you bring passion back to your job or role?
- Research, committee work, specialized training, private practice work. Write a book. Advocate for a cause.
- Depending on your field, there may be a culture that believes being overworked and “too busy” is the way life should be.
- It's not. Your career or role as a caregiver is not a sprint. Find ways to enjoy your career or caregiving role.



Setting Intentions or Goals

Based on your Ideal Life Exercise and Passion Projects:

- What changes can you make in the following week/month/year?
- What happens if you don't make any changes?
- What/Who can support you in making healthy changes?

What helps you set and track goals?

- Vision Boards?
- 90 Day Goal Setting?
- Caring Safely Week/Day Sheets?
- Putting them in your planner?
- Working with a coach?

Personalize and Integrate with Handout

Barriers to Sustainable Caring

- Some of the most common barriers to sustainable caring are:
 - Long-term motivation. It can be helpful to revisit your values and your "Ideal Day" exercise to keep your motivation for sustainable caring strong.
 - Negative thinking patterns, especially all or nothing thinking patterns that cause you to develop a "why bother" outlook when life throws you a hurdle and you fall back into old habits. Falling back into old habits are common, especially during stressful times, but there is a difference between a "blip" (falling back into old habits for a few hours/days or a week vs a "relapse" (falling back into old habits for weeks/months/years).
 - Struggles with self-esteem. If you struggle with self-esteem and core worth, to the point that it's preventing you from shifting some of your energy onto your own needs, then therapy can be a helpful option.
 - Not setting and tracking goals. Find a way to measure and track your goals so that you can regularly check in on your progress.

Measuring Progress

- Throughout Caring Safely you've received various frameworks, assessments and scales that can be used overtime to see how you are progressing:
 - Stages of Compassion Fatigue/Signs and Symptoms
 - Professional Quality of Life
 - The Wellness Gauge
 - Input vs. Output
 - Post Traumatic Growth Inventory
 - Vicarious Resilience Scale
 - Self-Esteem Scales
 - Self-Compassion Scales
- Everyone goes through ups and down, but the goal is to see long-term growth and resilience with a reduction in stress, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

More than compassion fatigue?

Compassion Fatigue is not a diagnosable psychiatric illness. If Compassion Fatigue progresses, people could develop a diagnosable psychiatric illness such as an anxiety disorder or mood disorder. These require specialized treatment from health care professionals.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD 7)

0-4 is within normal range

5-9 mild symptoms of anxiety

10-15 moderate symptoms of anxiety

16-21 severe symptoms of anxiety

Mood Disorders (Depression) (PHQ 9)

0-4 is within normal range

5-9 mild symptoms of depression

10-15 moderate symptoms of depression

16-21 moderately severe symptoms of depression

22-27 severe symptoms of depression

Handouts

Thank you!

- I am grateful that you have participated in Caring Safely.
- I hope that your work for Sustainable Caring has only just begun and that your personal awareness, nourishment and value based living continues to evolve.
- Your feedback is incredibly important and I review all of it.
- You will receive information about the next steps in your Caring Safely program via email.
- Sending you unconditional good energy!