

Answer “yes” or “no” to the questions below:

1. ___ Personal concerns commonly intrude on my professional role.
2. ___ My colleagues seem to lack understanding.
3. ___ I find even small changes enormously draining.
4. ___ I can't seem to recover quickly after association with a traumatic event.
5. ___ Association with trauma affects me very deeply.
6. ___ My clients' stress affects me deeply.
7. ___ I have lost my sense of hopefulness.
8. ___ I feel vulnerable much of the time.
9. ___ I feel overwhelmed by unfinished personal business.

Answering “yes” to four or more questions might indicate that you are suffering from compassion fatigue. This instrument is for informational purposes to serve as a quick check; it has not been validated.

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE (PROQOL) VERSION 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

1=Never

2=Rarely

3=Sometimes

4=Often

5=Very Often

- _____ 1. I am happy.
- _____ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
- _____ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
- _____ 4. I feel connected to others.
- _____ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
- _____ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
- _____ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
- _____ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- _____ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- _____ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
- _____ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
- _____ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
- _____ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
- _____ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- _____ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
- _____ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- _____ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- _____ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
- _____ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
- _____ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- _____ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- _____ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
- _____ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- _____ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
- _____ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
- _____ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- _____ 29. I am a very caring person.
- _____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, place your personal scores below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through 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. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

Burnout _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of Compassion Fatigue (CF). It 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. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 43, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 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.

Secondary Traumatic Stress _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example, field work in a war or area of civil violence, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, for example, as a therapist or an emergency worker, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, 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.

WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test so you understand the interpretation for you. To find your score on **each section**, total the questions listed on the left and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

3. _____
 6. _____
 12. _____
 16. _____
 18. _____
 20. _____
 22. _____
 24. _____
 27. _____
 30. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are "reverse scored." If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. "I am happy" tells us more about

- *1. _____ = _____
 *4. _____ = _____
 8. _____
 10. _____
 *15. _____ = _____
 *17. _____ = _____
 19. _____
 21. _____
 26. _____
 *29. _____ = _____

Total: _____

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

You Wrote	Change to	
	5	the effects of helping when you are <i>not</i> happy so you reverse the score
2	4	
3	3	
4	2	
5	1	

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

2. _____
 5. _____
 7. _____
 9. _____
 11. _____
 13. _____
 14. _____
 23. _____
 25. _____
 28. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Life Stress Test

As caregivers, we are often stressed and don't know why. Without realizing the effects that life circumstances have on us, we tend to sweep our feelings of frustration, sadness and turmoil under the rug.

In the past **12 to 24 months**, which of the following major life events have taken place in your life?

Mark down the points for each event that you have experienced this year. When you're done looking at the whole list, add up the points for each event and check your score at the bottom.

- _____ Death of Spouse (**100 points**)
- _____ Divorce (**73 points**)
- _____ Marital Separation or from relationship partner (**65 points**)
- _____ Jail Term (**63 points**)
- _____ Death of close family member (**63 points**)
- _____ Personal injury or illness (**53 points**)
- _____ Marriage (**50 points**)
- _____ Fired from work (**47 points**)
- _____ Marital reconciliation (**45 points**)
- _____ Retirement (**45 points**)
- _____ Change in family member's health (**44 points**)
- _____ Pregnancy (**40 points**)
- _____ Sex difficulties (**39 points**)
- _____ Addition to family (**39 points**)
- _____ Business readjustment (**39 points**)
- _____ Change in financial status (**38 points**)
- _____ Death of close friend (**37 points**)
- _____ Change to a different line of work (**36 points**)
- _____ Change in number of marital arguments (**35 points**)
- _____ Mortgage or loan over \$30,000 (**31 points**)
- _____ Foreclosure of mortgage or loan (**30 points**)
- _____ Change in work responsibilities (**29 points**)
- _____ Trouble with in-laws (**29 points**)
- _____ Outstanding personal achievement (**28 points**)
- _____ Spouse begins or stops work (**26 points**)
- _____ Starting or finishing school (**26 points**)
- _____ Change in living conditions (**25 points**)
- _____ Revision of personal habits (**24 points**)
- _____ Trouble with boss (**23 points**)
- _____ Change in work hours, conditions (**20 points**)
- _____ Change in residence (**20 points**)
- _____ Change in schools (**20 points**)
- _____ Change in recreational habits (**19 points**)

- _____ Change in church activities (**19 points**)
- _____ Change in social activities (**18 points**)
- _____ Mortgage or loan under \$20,000 (**17 points**)
- _____ Change in sleeping habits (**16 points**)
- _____ Change in number of family gatherings (**15 points**)
- _____ Change in eating habits (**15 points**)
- _____ Vacation (**13 points**)
- _____ Christmas season (**12 points**)
- _____ Minor violations of the law (**11 points**)

_____ Your Total Score

This scale shows the kind of life pressure that you are facing. Depending on your coping skills or the lack thereof, this scale can predict the likelihood that you will fall victim to a stress related illness. The illness could be mild - frequent tension headaches, acid indigestion, loss of sleep to very serious illness like ulcers, cancer, migraines and the like.

LIFE STRESS SCORES

0-149: Low susceptibility to stress-related illness

150-299: Medium susceptibility to stress-related illness:

Learn and practice relaxation and stress management skills and a healthy well life style.

300 and over: High susceptibility to stress-related illness:

Daily practice of relaxation skills is very important for your wellness. Take care of it now before a serious illness erupts or an affliction becomes worse.

Permission to reprint the Life Stress Test received from:

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SELF-CARE TIPS FOR HELPERS

Transforming Compassion Fatigue into Compassion Satisfaction

Based on the work of Francoise Mathieu, M.Ed., CCC.,
Compassion Fatigue Specialist



1 Take stock of what's on your plate

What factors are contributing to making your plate too full? Life situations or things you have taken on? What would you like to change most? If you are comfortable sharing this with a trusted friend or colleague, have a brainstorming discussion with them on strategies and new ideas.

2 Start a self-care idea collection

You could even start a contest for the best self-care idea of the week or have a "self-care board" where people post their favorite ideas. You could have a "5 minutes of self-care" at each staff meeting, where someone is in charge of bringing a new self-care idea each week. Once you have a really nice long list, pick three ideas that jump out at you. Make a commitment to implementing these in your life within the next month.

3 Find time for yourself every day— Rebalance your workload

Can you think of simple ways to take mini breaks during a work day? This could simply be that you bring your favorite coffee cup to work, and have a ritual at lunch where you close your door (if you have a door) and listen to 10 minutes of your favorite music. Make sure you do one nourishing activity each day.

4 Delegate—learn to ask for help at home and at work

Don't expect others to read your mind: consider holding regular meetings at home and at work to review your workload and discuss new options.

5 Have a transition from work to home

Do you have a transition time between work and home? Do you have a 20 minute walk home through a beautiful park or are you stuck in traffic for two hours? Do you walk in the door to kids fighting and hanging from the curtains or do you walk into a peaceful house? Do you have a transition process when you get home? One example is staying outside for an extra 10 minutes, watching the birds at the birdfeeder.

6 Learn to say no (or yes) more often

Helpers are often attracted to the field because they are naturally giving to others. Are you the person who ends up on all the committees at work? Are you on work related boards? Do you volunteer in the helping field as well as work in it? Do you think you are good at setting limits? If not, this is something that needs exploring, perhaps with a counsellor. Can you think of one thing you could do to say no a bit more often?

Conversely, maybe you have stopped saying yes to all requests, because you are feeling so depleted and burned down, feel resentful and taken for granted. Have you stopped saying yes to friends, to new opportunities?

Take a moment to reflect on this question and see where you fit best: Do you need to learn to say no or yes more often?

7 Assess your trauma inputs

Do you work with clients who have experienced trauma? Do you read about, see photos of, and are generally exposed to difficult stories and images at your work? Take a trauma input survey of a typical day in your life. Starting at home, what does your day begin with? Watching morning news on tv? Listening to the radio or reading the paper? Note how many disturbing images and difficult stories you are exposed to. Now look at your work. Not counting direct client work, how many difficult stories do you hear, whether it be in a case conference, around the water cooler debriefing a colleague or reading files?

It is important to recognize the amount of trauma information that we unconsciously absorb during the course of a day.

In a nutshell, there is a lot of extra trauma input outside of client work that we do not necessarily need to absorb or to hear about. We can create a "trauma filter" to protect ourselves from this extraneous material.

8 Learn more about Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma

Compassion Fatigue (CF) and Vicarious Trauma (VT) are serious, profound changes that happen to helpers. Learn more about CF and VT, including ways to recognize the signs and symptoms and strategies to address the problem. Consider attending a workshop or read more on the topic.

9 Consider joining a supervision/peer support group

Not all places of work offer the opportunity for peer support. You can organize such a group on your own (whether it be face to face meetings or via email or phone). This can be as small as a group of three colleagues who meet once a month or once a week to debrief and offer support to one another.

10 Attend workshops/professional training regularly

Researchers in the field of Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma have identified that attending regular professional training is one of the best ways for helpers to stay renewed and healthy. There are of course several benefits to this: connecting with peers, taking time off work, and building on your clinical skills. Identify an area of expertise that you want to hone. If you are not able to travel to workshops, consider taking online courses.

11 Consider working part time (at this type of job)

Managers often cringe when they hear this, but studies have shown that one of the best protective factors against Compassion Fatigue is to work part time or at least, to see clients on a part time basis and to have other duties the rest of the time.

12 Exercise

We tell our clients how important physical exercise is. Do you do it on a regular basis? Can you think of three small ways to increase your physical activity? One busy counselling service hired a yoga instructor to come once a week to their office and everyone chipped in their \$10 and did yoga together at lunch. Another agency said that they had created a walking club, and that a group of helpers walk outside for 30 minutes three times a week. The key to actually increasing physical exercise is to be realistic in the goals we set out for ourselves. If you don't exercise at all, aiming to walk around the block twice a week is a realistic goal, running a 10km run in two weeks is not.

▶ One More TIP

Once you have chosen the elements of your stress reduction program, Cheryl Sharp, Trauma and Compassion Fatigue Expert from the National Council suggests you create a wellness plan such as WRAP so you can "catch it, check it and change it" ASAP.

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TIPS FOR SUPERVISORS

- Walk around the office to check in on staff and ask how they are doing that day or if they need anything
- Suggest that staff take mini breaks throughout the day to get fresh air, have a snack, stretch
- Engage staff in team huddles, meetings to debrief and allow for support of each other
- Empower staff to start their own staff support group
- Ensure that staff has opportunities for learning inside and outside of the work setting.
- Feeling competent to do own work reduces stress
- Give staff the tools and resources they need to do their jobs
- Celebrate individual and collective successes

CARING FOR YOURSELF IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULT WORK

Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.

10 things to do for each day

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Do some light exercise.
4. Vary the work that you do.
5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Focus on what you did well.
7. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Share a private joke.
9. Pray, meditate or relax.
10. Support a colleague.

For more information see your supervisor and visit www.psychosocial.org or www.proqol.org

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SWITCHING ON AND OFF

It is your empathy for others helps you do this work. It is vital to take good care of your thoughts and feelings by monitoring how you use them. Resilient workers know how to turn their feelings off when they go on duty, but on again when they go off duty. This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (switched off) and maximum support while resting (switched on).

How to become better at switching on and off

1. Switching is a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
2. Use images that make you feel safe and protected (switch off) or connected and cared for (switch on) to help you switch.
3. Find rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.
4. Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.

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