

# COMPASSION FATIGUE BURN OUT VICARIOUS TRAUMA

AN EXPLORATION OF DIFFERENCES AND SIGNS

# DEFINITIONS

- **Compassion Fatigue:** Characterised by an indifference to charitable appeals on behalf of suffering people, experienced as a result of the frequency or number of appeals.
- **Burn Out:** Characterised by a cease to function as a result of excessive heat or friction, with a sense of complete exhaustion.
- **Vicarious Trauma:** Characterised by the presence of emotional residue of exposure from working with people telling their stories of trauma, pain, fear and terror.
- Source: American Trauma Society

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

SOURCE: Transitional Support, Australia

<http://transitionalsupport.com.au/transitional-phase/compassion-fatigue-trauma/>

ShaneWarren.asia

Burnout	Compassion Fatigue	Vicarious Traumatization
<b>Signs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Frustration</li> <li>• Negative reactions towards others</li> <li>• Cynicism</li> <li>• Negativity</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> </ul>	<b>Signs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadness &amp; Grief</li> <li>• Avoidance or dread of working with some patients</li> <li>• Reduced ability to feel empathy towards patients or families</li> <li>• Somatic complaints</li> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Frequent use of sick days</li> <li>• Increased psychological arousal</li> <li>• Changes in beliefs, expectations assumptions</li> <li>• Detachment</li> <li>• Decreased intimacy</li> </ul>	<b>Signs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Sadness</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Apathy</li> <li>• Intrusive imagery</li> <li>• Loss of control, trust &amp; independence</li> <li>• Somatic complaints</li> <li>• Relational disturbances</li> </ul>
<b>Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Psychological</li> <li>• Cognitive</li> <li>• Relational Disturbances</li> </ul>	<b>Symptoms (mirror PTSD)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Digestive problems</li> <li>• Muscle tension</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Psychological distress</li> <li>• Cognitive shifts</li> <li>• Relational Disturbances</li> <li>• Poor concentration, focus &amp; judgement</li> </ul>	<b>Symptoms (mirror PTSD)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Psychological distress</li> <li>• Cognitive shifts</li> <li>• Relational Disturbances</li> </ul>
<b>Triggers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• Work-related attributes</li> <li>• Work organisational characteristics</li> </ul>	<b>Triggers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• Previous exposure to trauma</li> <li>• Empathy &amp; emotional energy</li> <li>• Prolonged exposure to trauma material of clients</li> <li>• Response to stressor</li> <li>• Work environment</li> <li>• Work-related attitudes</li> </ul>	<b>Triggers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• Previous exposure to trauma</li> <li>• Type of therapy</li> <li>• Organisational context</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Re-enactment</li> </ul>

ShaneWarren.com

# FOCUS: COMPASSION FATIGUE

## EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, helpless or powerless when hearing of others' suffering

Feelings of anger, irritability, sadness and anxiety

Feeling detached from your surroundings or from our physical or emotional experience

Feeling emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted, burnt out or numbness

Reduced empathy

Feeling hypersensitive or insensitive to stories we hear or to emotional material we might hear or see

Limited tolerance for stress

SOURCE: Canadian Occupational Safety Authority

# FOCUS: COMPASSION FATIGUE

## COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

Constant thinking or dwelling around the suffering of the trauma survivors

Constant self-blame or thoughts of “I should or could have done more”

Changes in belief systems (such as belief about self, others, world, future) or meaning in life

Reduced sense of personal and occupational accomplishment or efficacy

Difficulty concentrating, focusing or making decisions

SOURCE: Canadian Occupational Safety Authority

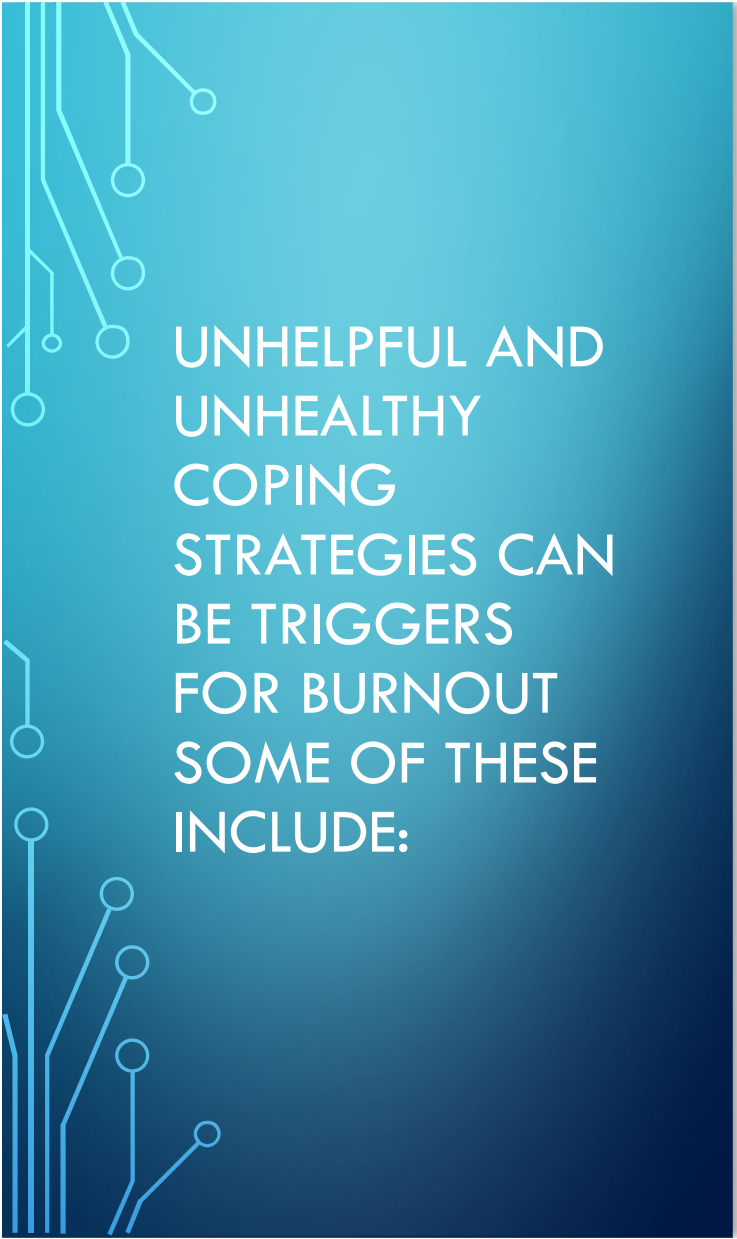
# FOCUS: COMPASSION FATIGUE

## PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Nausea,  
dizziness,  
headaches

Difficulty  
sleeping and  
nightmares

Being tense,  
agitated and  
on edge



UNHELPFUL AND  
UNHEALTHY  
COPING  
STRATEGIES CAN  
BE TRIGGERS  
FOR BURNOUT  
SOME OF THESE  
INCLUDE:

---

Work longer hours

---

Don't delegate

---

Don't take breaks

---

Don't say no

---

Bottle up feelings

---

Procrastinate and avoid

---

Be a perfectionist

---

Take work home

---

Take on social justice issues

---

Take on issues

---

Don't talk about it

---

Squeeze out hobbies

# SELF ASSESSMENT: PROQOL\_V

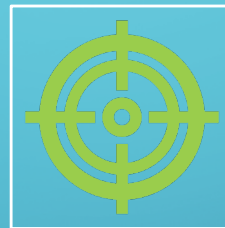
**PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)**  
COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE  
(PROQOL) VERSION 5 (2009)

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.

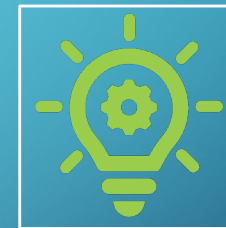
1=Never    2=Rarely    3=Sometimes    4=Often    5=Very Often

- \_\_\_ 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.

© & Hudson Stamm, 2009-2012. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL). www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold. Those interested in using the test should visit www.proqol.org to verify that the copy they are using is the most current version of the test.



The Professional Quality of Life Measure is designed to help you identify the level of 'satisfaction' you have from the role you play in your worklife.



It is a useful tool to identify what might be areas to focus on in life, and challenges you to explore changes you need to make.



# WHAT TO DO?

SOURCE: Professional  
Quality of Life Measure

## 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 each day

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Vary the work that you do.
4. Do some light exercise.
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 or visit [www.istss.org](http://www.istss.org),  
[www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org) and [www.compassionfatigue.org](http://www.compassionfatigue.org)**

© Eastwoods, LLC, 2020. Authors: Beth Hudnall Stamm, Craig Higson-Smith, Amy C Hudnall and Henry E Stamm, IV 2004-2020.  
This card may be freely copied and distributed as long as (a) authors are credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold.

## FOCUSING YOUR EMPATHY

Your empathy for others helps you do your job. It is important to take good care of your feelings and thoughts by monitoring how you use them. The most resilient workers are those that know how to turn their feelings to work mode when they go on duty, but off-work mode when they go off duty. This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (feelings switched to work mode) and maximum support while resting (feelings switched off-work mode).

### How to become better at switching between Work and Off-Work Modes

1. Make this a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
2. Use images that make you feel safe and protected (work-mode) or connected and cared for (non-work mode) to help you switch.
3. Develop rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.
4. Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.



# PRESENTED BY SHANE WARREN

**OF SHANE WARREN COACHING & COUNSELLING SERVICES**

*CHANGING LIVES THROUGH SIMPLE SOLUTIONS!*

[www.ShaneWarren.asia](http://www.ShaneWarren.asia)

[www.ShaneWarren.com](http://www.ShaneWarren.com)

# WANT TO TALK MORE?

## COACHING & COUNSELLING SERVICES

[ShaneWarren.com](http://ShaneWarren.com)

## EMPLOYEE WELLBEING SERVICES

[ShaneWarren.asia](http://ShaneWarren.asia)

## RESILIENT MINDSET & GRIT ENRICHMENT COACHING

[IRISconsulting.com.au](http://IRISconsulting.com.au)

## PARENT, FAMILY & COUPLES SUPPORT STRATEGIES

[PoppetCentre.com](http://PoppetCentre.com)

## WHOLISTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY RETREATS

[MintCondition.asia](http://MintCondition.asia)

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SEMINARS

[NexusCollege.com.au](http://NexusCollege.com.au)

ShaneWarren.asia

*Shane Warren*  
COACH | COUNSELLOR | CONSULTANT

ShaneWarren.com