



Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue occurs when someone takes on so much of the stress and suffering of those around them that they struggle to build or maintain their own resilience. While it is common to people in helping professions, it could happen to anyone who is a caregiver or who provides ongoing emotional support to others.

Common signs of compassion fatigue include:

- Emotional and physical exhaustion
- Isolating from others
- Focusing on others to the exclusion of their own wellbeing
- Depressive symptoms, including low mood, poor sleep, sadness, or anxiety
- Feelings of apathy, hopelessness, or futility
- Flashbacks or intrusive thoughts
- Unhealthy coping behaviors

Some people are more susceptible to compassion fatigue. Common characteristics in those who develop the condition include:

- A history of being in a caregiver role from a young age
- Poor self-esteem or personal boundaries
- An inability to recognize personal limits
- Feeling pressured to put others first
- Unresolved trauma

Whether you are in a caring profession or provide caregiving for one or more family members, it is



important to set limits, take breaks, and attend to your own wellbeing. Actions that will help to restore your resilience include:

- Focus on your physical self-care by getting enough sleep, exercising for at least 30 minutes most days of the week, and eating lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Engage in activities that help you relax and recharge, such as meditation or a hobby
- Connect with supportive friends and family
- For family caregivers: Ask other family members, friends, or neighbors to help with daily needs or seek assistance from an in-home care organization

Making self-care a priority and asking for help when it is needed are key steps in recovering from compassion fatigue. In addition, LifeMatters can assist with managing stress, rebuilding resilience, and locating helpful resources. Help is available 24/7/365.

1-800-634-6433

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