

Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- _____ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- _____ Eat healthily
- _____ Exercise
- _____ Get regular medical care for prevention
- _____ Get medical care when needed
- _____ Take time off when sick
- _____ Get massages
- _____ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- _____ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- _____ Get enough sleep
- _____ Wear clothes I like
- _____ Take vacations
- _____ Other:

Psychological Self-Care

- _____ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- _____ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- _____ Make time for self-reflection
- _____ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- _____ Have my own personal psychotherapy
- _____ Write in a journal
- _____ Read literature that is unrelated to work
- _____ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- _____ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- _____ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- _____ Be curious

- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other:

Emotional Self-Care

- Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in my life
- Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- Love myself
- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- Allow myself to cry
- Find things that make me laugh
- Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- Other:

Spiritual Self-Care

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- Other:

Relationship Self-Care

- Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- Schedule regular activities with my children
- Make time to see friends
- Call, check on, or see my relatives
- Spend time with my companion animals
- Stay in contact with faraway friends
- Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
- Allow others to do things for me
- Enlarge my social circle
- Ask for help when I need it
- Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- Other:

Workplace or Professional Self-Care

- Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with clients and colleagues
- Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- Have a peer support group
- (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

Overall Balance

- Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You

(Retrieved 8/6/2010 from
http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml and adapted by Lisa D.
Butler, Ph.D.)

Is your lifestyle causing you stress?

The way you live your life can have a big impact on your health, well-being, and how well or poorly you handle stress. Below are lifestyle behaviors that affect stress levels. Please check the boxes that apply to you. Doing an honest assessment of how well or poorly you take care of yourself can help you manage your stress in the future.

Lifestyle Behaviors					
When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No	When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No
Smoke/use tobacco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage in physical activity at least three times a week for 30 minutes each day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink a lot of coffee or caffeinated drinks (more than 2-3 cups per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get six to eight hours of sleep every night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink alcohol (more than recommended levels of 1-2 per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain good eating habits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overuse over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make time to relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overeat or under eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain a sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend too much money (e.g., do you have a lot of credit card debt and have trouble making payments?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abuse/overuse tranquilizers or other over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain healthy rituals and routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch too much television (more than 3-4 hours per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be optimistic. Engage in positive thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have angry outbursts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdraw from people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make plans for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignore or deny stress symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Figure out ways to manage stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage in self-destructive relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reward yourself for your accomplishments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
These are negative self-care behaviors.			These are positive self-care behaviors.		

(Source: Unknown)

21 Ways to Reduce Stress During the Workday

By Saki Santorelli

1. Take five to thirty minutes in the morning to be quiet and meditate, and/or lie down and be with yourself... gaze out the window, listen to the sounds of nature, or take a slow quiet walk.
2. While your car is warming up, try taking a minute to quietly pay attention to your breathing.
3. While driving, become aware of body tension, e.g., hands wrapped tightly around the steering wheel, shoulders raised, stomach tight, etc., consciously working at releasing, dissolving that tension... Does being tense help you to drive better? What does it feel like to relax and drive?
4. Decide not to play the radio and be with your own sound.
5. On the interstate, experiment with riding in the right lane, going five miles below the speed limit.
6. Pay attention to your breathing and to the sky, trees, or quality of your mind, when stopped at a red light or toll plaza.
7. Take a moment to orient yourself to your workday once you park your car at the workplace. Use the walk across the parking lot to step in to your life. To know where you are and where you are going.
8. While sitting at your desk, keyboard, etc., pay attention to bodily sensations, again consciously attempting to relax and rid yourself of excess tension.
9. Use your breaks to truly relax rather than simply "pausing." For instance, instead of having coffee, a cigarette, or reading, try taking a short walk – or sitting at your desk and renewing yourself.
10. For lunch, try changing your environment. This can be helpful..
11. Try closing your door (if you have one) and take some time to consciously relax.
12. Decide to stop for one to three minutes every hour during the workday. Become aware of your breathing and bodily sensations, allowing the mind to settle in as a time to regroup and recoup.
13. Use the everyday cues in your environment as reminders to "center" yourself, e.g., the telephone ringing, sitting at the computer terminal, etc.
14. Take some time at lunch or other moments in the day to speak with close associates. Try choosing topics that are not necessarily work related.
15. Choose to eat one or two lunches per week in silences. Use this as a time to eat slowly and be with yourself.
16. At the end of the workday, try retracing today's activities, acknowledging and congratulating yourself for what you've accomplished and then make a list for tomorrow. You've done enough for today!

17. Pay attention to the short walk to your car – breathing the crisp or warm air. Feel the cold or warmth of your body. What might happen if you open up to and accept these environmental conditions and bodily sensations rather than resist them? Listen to the sounds outside your workplace. Can you walk without feeling rushed? What happens when you slow down?
18. At the end of the workday, while your car is warming up, sit quietly and consciously make the transition from work to home – take a moment to simply *be* – enjoy it for a moment. Like most of us, you’re heading into your next full-time job – home!
19. While driving, notice if you are rushing. What does this feel like? What could you do about it? Remember, you’ve got more control than you might imagine.
20. When you pull into the driveway or park on the street, take a minute to orient yourself to being with your family members or to entering your home.
21. Try changing out of work clothes when you get home. This simple act might help you to make a smoother transition into your next “role” – much of the time you can probably “spare” five minutes to do this. Say hello to each of your family members or to the people you live with. Take a moment to look in their eyes. If possible, make the time to take five to ten minutes to be quiet and still. If you live alone, feel what it is like to enter the quietness of your home, the feeling of entering your own environment.

Adapted from materials retrieved 7/26/2010 from
<http://www.bemindful.org/mindmastery.pdf>

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and 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.

What is my score and what does it mean?

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

Scoring

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. Go to items 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29 and reverse your score. For example, if you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. We ask you to reverse these scores because we have learned that the test works better if you reverse these scores.

You Wrote	Change to
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

To find your score on **Compassion Satisfaction**, add your scores on questions 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.

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

To find your score on **Burnout**, add your scores questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 29. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Burnout questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Burnout
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

To find your score on **Secondary Traumatic Stress**, add your scores on questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28. Find your score on the table below.

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

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, your personal scores are 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. 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 18, 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. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, due to your work as a soldier or civilian working in military medicine personnel, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others’ traumatic events as a result of your work, such as providing care to casualties or for those in a military medical rehabilitation facility, 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.

Putting Things Into Perspective

Where is your time going?

1. Number of hours of sleep each night _____ X 7 = _____
2. Number of grooming hours per day _____ X 7 = _____
3. Number of hours for meals/snacks per day – include preparation time _____ X 7 = _____
4. Total travel time each weekday _____ X 5 = _____
5. Total travel time on weekends _____
6. Number of hours per week for regularly scheduled functions (clubs, church, get-togethers, etc.) _____
7. Number of hours per day for chores, errands, extra grooming, etc. _____ X 7 = _____
8. Number of hours of work/internship per week _____
9. Number of hours in class per week _____
10. Number of average hours per week socializing, dates, TV, web surfing, etc. Be honest! _____

Now add up the totals:

Subtract your total from 168

$$168 - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

The remaining hours are the hours you have allowed yourself to study.

(SOURCE: Unknown)