

Compassion Fatigue Self-Test

[Helping] people puts you in direct contact with their lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you [help] has both positive and negative aspects. We would like to ask you questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last 30 days. You may substitute the appropriate target group for [helping/help/helper] if that is not the best term. For example, if you are working with teachers, replace [helper] with teacher. Word changes may be made to any word in italicized square brackets to make the measure read more smoothly for a particular target group.

0=Never

1=Rarely

2=A Few Times

3=Somewhat Often

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 losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- ___ 9. I think I might have been 'infected' by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- ___ 10. I feel trapped by my work 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 as a result of my work as a [helper].
- ___ 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. Because of my work as a [helper], I feel exhausted.
- ___ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could [help] them.
- ___ 21. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or the size of my case[work] load I have to deal with.
- ___ 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 sensitive person.
____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

Self-scoring directions, if used as self-test:

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. On some items the scores need to be reversed. Next to your response write the reverse of that score (i.e. 0=0, 1=5, 2=4, 3=3). Reverse the scores on these 5 items: 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29. Please note that the value 0 is not reversed, as its value is always null.
3. Mark the items for scoring:
 1. Put an X by the 10 items that form the Compassion Satisfaction Scale: 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.
 2. Put a check by the 10 items on the Burnout Scale: 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, 29.
 3. Circle the 10 items on the Trauma/Compassion Fatigue Scale: 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28.
 4. Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items and compare with the theoretical scores below.

COMPASSION SATISFACTION/FATIGUE SCORES

Your potential for Compassion Satisfaction (Section a, items with an 'x'):

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 37 (SD 7; alpha scale reliability .87). About 25% of people score higher than 42 and about 25% of people score below 33. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 33, 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.

Your risk for Burnout (Section b, checked items):

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout 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 22 (SD 6.0; alpha scale reliability .72). About 25% of people score above 27 and about 25% of people score below 18. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 27 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.

Your risk for Compassion Fatigue (Section c, circled items):

Compassion fatigue (CF), also called secondary trauma (STS) and related to Vicarious Trauma (VT), is about your work-related, secondary exposure to extremely stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called VT. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, such as being a soldier or humanitarian aide worker, 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 in an emergency room or working with child protective services, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of CF/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 13 (SD 6; alpha scale reliability .80). About 25% of people score below 8 and about 25% of people score above 17. If your score is above 17, 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.