

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

**Compassion fatigue is the normal reaction to the various trauma you witness on a daily basis when you care for others.**

*“the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people or animals”*

Dr Charles Figley

**The phases of Compassion Fatigue are:**

## **Anxiety**

- Feeling constantly on edge, finding it hard to sleep and concentrate and experiencing the physical effects of the stress response

## **Irritability**

- Being short tempered and irritated by very minor things, feeling ill and having constant back or neck pain.

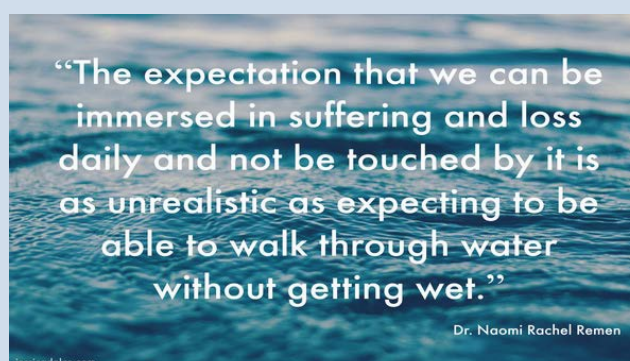
## **Withdrawal**

- Just wanting to shut the world out avoiding social activities and finding excuses for not doing exercise or hobbies

## **Robot**

- Becoming hardened and feeling detached and unemotional and telling yourself that its ok to feel this way or telling others they are too emotional

All these feelings are completely normal and do not mean you care any less or are not coping and you can experience all of them in a day, the problem occurs when you get 'stuck' in one phase and don't react to help yourself



## DAILY SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

### A - AWARENESS

- How are you feeling - be honest!
- What pressures are you under?
- What do you need to do for yourself?

### B - BODY

- Check for tension in your body
- What have you eaten? Food = Mood
- Have you drunk enough fluid?
- Have you had enough sleep?
- Have you taken any exercise?

### C - COMPASSION (self)

- How can you be kind to yourself today?
- have you made some 'me time' today?
- What brings you joy?

**Your 'Meerkat Moment'!**



# SELF COMPASSION

Self Compassion is, simply put, a twist on the “golden rule”: it is the act of doing unto yourself as you already do unto others

## THE MOUNTAIN

If the mountain seems too big today  
then climb a hill instead;  
If morning brings you sadness  
it's okay to stay in bed.

If the day ahead feels heavy and your plans feel like a curse,  
There's no shame in rearranging,  
don't make yourself feel worse.

If a shower stings like needles  
and a bath feels like you'll drown;  
If you haven't washed your hair for days,  
don't throw away your crown!

A day is not a lifetime.

A rest is not defeat.

Don't think of it as failure,  
Just a quiet, kind retreat.

It's okay to take a moment  
From an anxious, fractured mind.

The world will not stop turning  
While you get realigned!

The mountain will still be there  
When you want to try again  
You can climb it in your own time,  
Just love yourself till then!

Laura Ding Edwards

## THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

- **Reduces stress – burns off adrenaline**
- **Helps you sleep**
- **Time outside – if you are in all day**
- **Alleviates anxiety – increases dopamine**
- **Lifts your mood**
- **Motivates you**



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BY

JAYNE ELLIS AND TRUDI DAVISON

EF TRAINING

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# SIMPLE SLEEP STRATEGIES

IDEAS TO HELP YOU REST RELAX AND RECHARGE



BY

JAYNE ELLIS

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF EF TRAINING

# Recap and summary

**If you realise that you are being affected by compassion fatigue and experiencing the symptoms consider the following:**

## **If you feel anxious:**

- Unplug yourself – limit news and social media
- Exercise – burn off the adrenaline
- Make sure you are getting enough sleep
- Monitor what you are eating
- Try some relaxation exercises

## **If you feel irritable**

- Spend time with people who are nothing to do with work
- Find your passion - this will give you energy
- Organise and protect your 'me time'

## **If you feel withdrawn**

- Spend time with radiators
- Have fun with friends and loved ones
- Take your time off
- Talk about how you are feeling

## **If you feel detached**

- Admit to yourself how you are feeling - don't ignore it
- Remind yourself why you do the job - write this down
- Talk to someone at work about how you feel
- Get help if you don't feel better

## **REMEMBER!**

**Compassion Fatigue is an occupational hazard. It is the physical and emotional reaction to the trauma you witness. The symptoms ebb and flow depending on multiple factors, just because you feel it does not mean you are weak or unable to do, you are building up your emotional resilience, recognise the symptoms and then responding with self-care. This will help you be able to do the job you love for as long as you want to.**



# Further Reading

**Compassion Fatigue: Coping With Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder In Those Who Treat The Traumatized** by Dr Charles Figley

**To Weep for a Stranger – Compassion Fatigue in Caregiving** by Patricia Smith

**Overcoming Compassion Fatigue – A Practical Resilience Workbook** by Martha Teater

**The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion - Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions** by Christopher Germer

**Help for the Helper – The Psychophysiology of Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma –**  
Babette Rothschild

For further information, support and resources please go to [www.eftraining.co.uk](http://www.eftraining.co.uk)



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