

# Compassion Fatigue in Family Caregivers

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*“What is to give light must endure burning”*

**Viktor Frankl**



# Disclosures

I have nothing to disclose.

# Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

1. Define compassion and compassion fatigue.
2. Identify symptoms of compassion fatigue.
3. Discuss compassion fatigue assessment tools.
4. Describe interventions and resources available to help manage compassion fatigue.
5. Discuss family caregiver compassion fatigue.

# Compassion



# What is Compassion Fatigue?

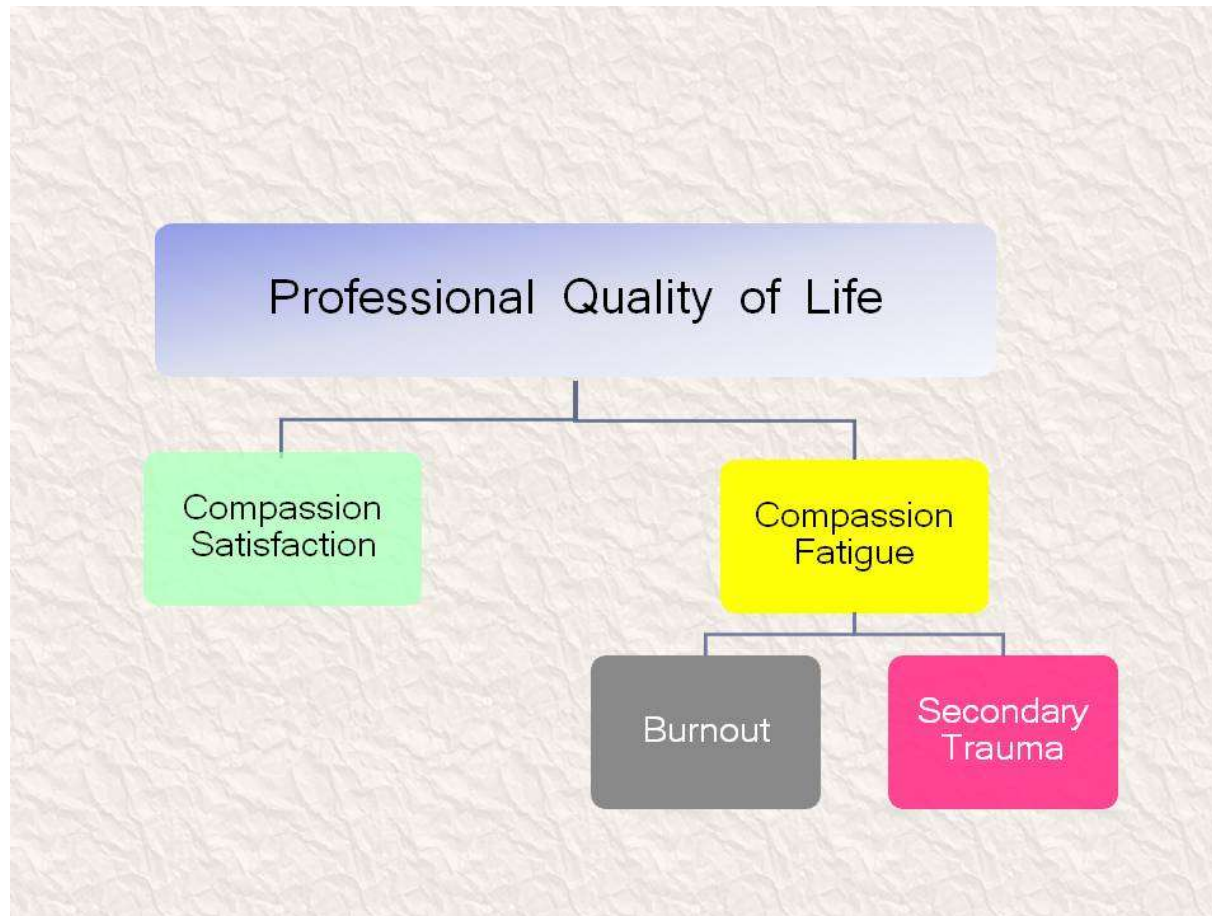
- “The physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those who care for sick or traumatized people over an extended period of time”
- *“A disorder that affects those who do their work well” (Figley, 1995)*

# What is Compassion Fatigue?

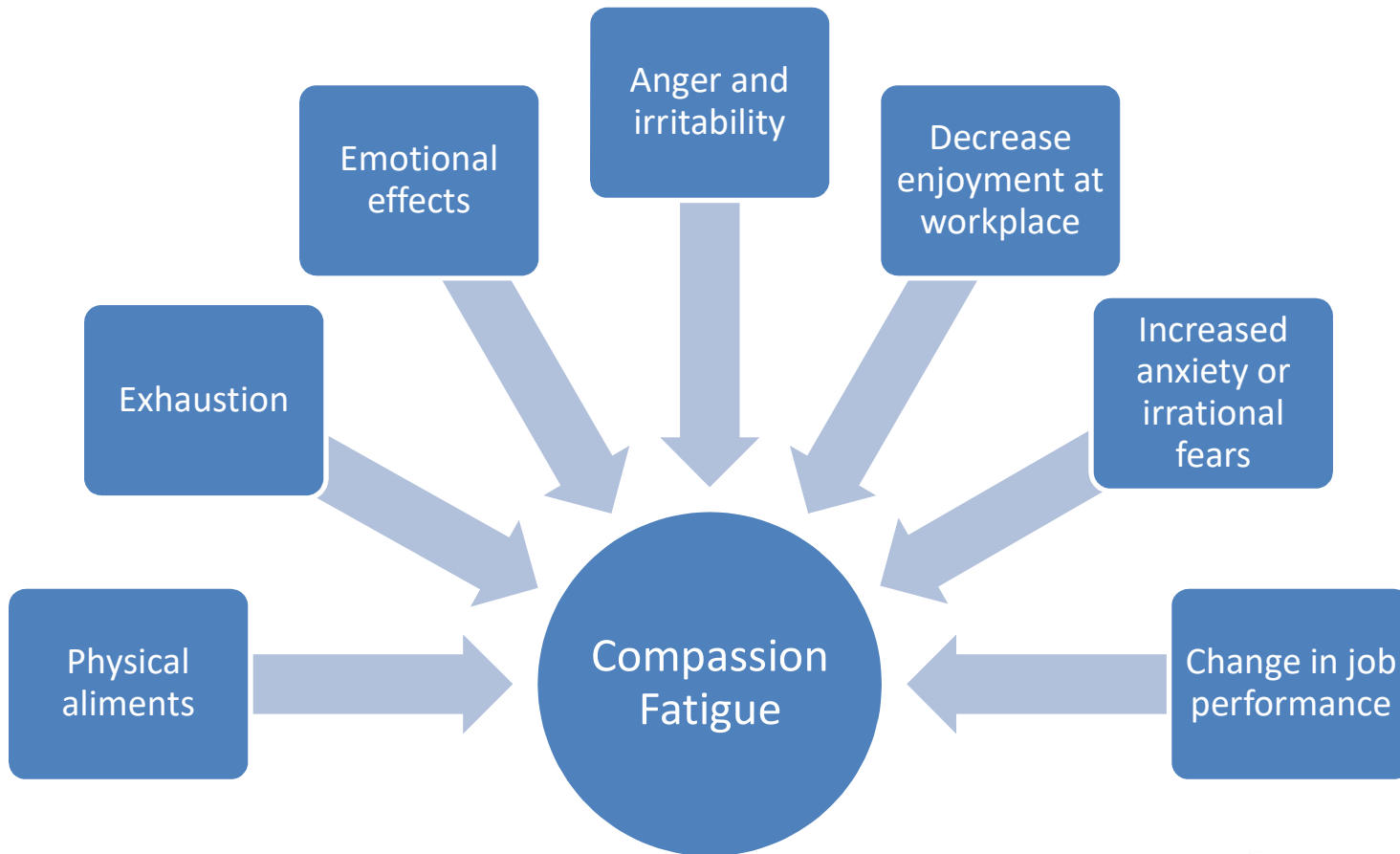
## Compassion Fatigue

- Deep emotional and physical exhaustion
- Resembles depression and PTSD
- Shifts the caregiver's value of their work
- Decline in energy, desire or ability to love and nurture
- Difficulty empathizing with another's suffering

# ProQOL Compassion Fatigue Model

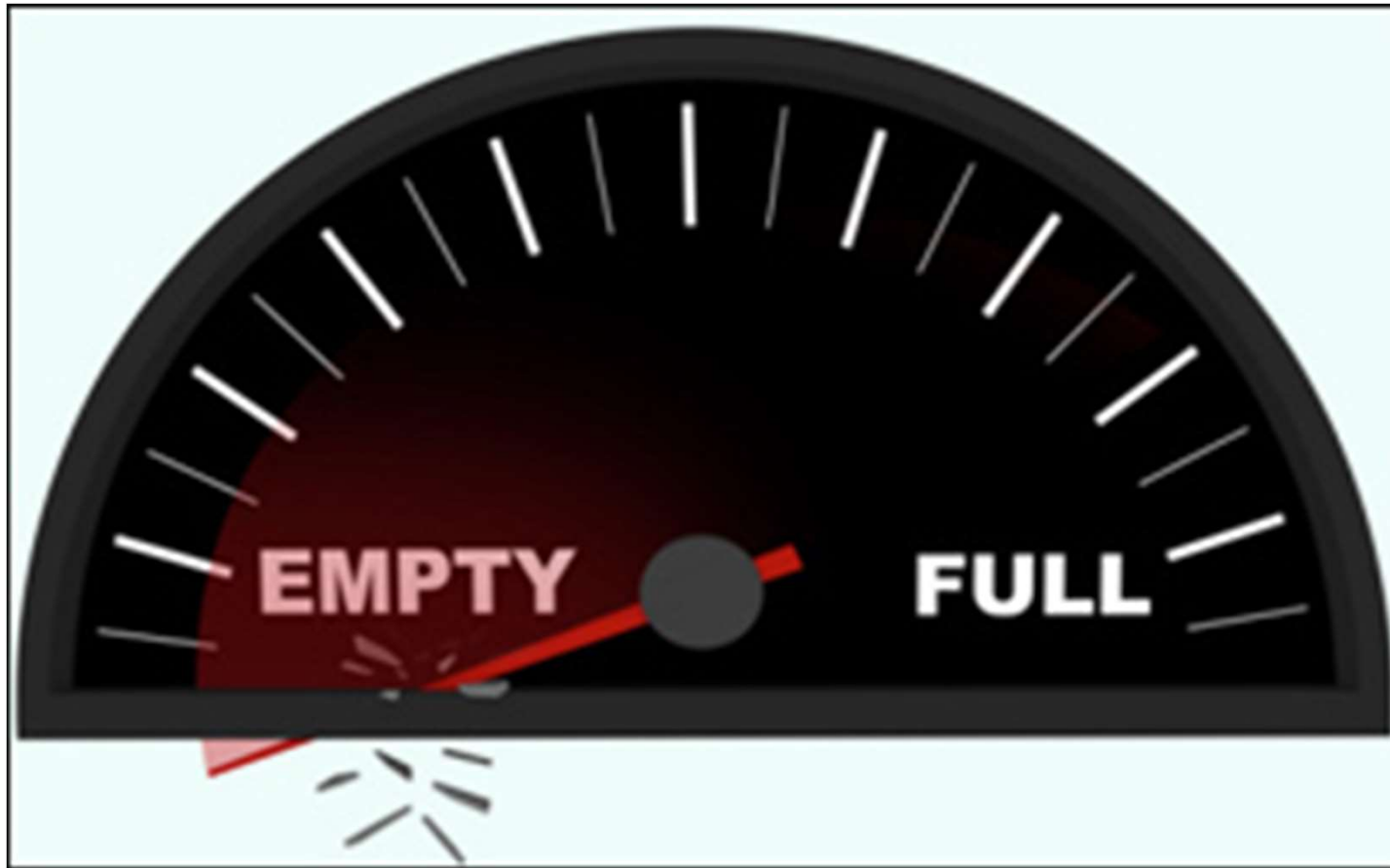


# Signs and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue





# Measuring Compassion Fatigue



# Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL)

## 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.

[http://chapter.vc.ons.org/file\\_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/1337/folder/1117781/ProQOL\\_5\\_English\\_Self-Score\\_3-2012.pdf](http://chapter.vc.ons.org/file_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/1337/folder/1117781/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score_3-2012.pdf)

**NCI** Comprehensive  
Cancer Center

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National Cancer Institute

 UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND  
MARLENE AND STEWART GREENEBAUM  
CANCER CENTER

# Provider Resilience

Self-care tool for healthcare providers who work with service members and who may need support in coping with burnout or compassion fatigue

Features:

- Quick dashboard view
- Graphing to track resilience progress
- Tools to assist increasing resilience
- Inspirational value cards
- User sets reminders



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# Measuring Personal Well-Being

## Self-Care Assessment

Tool to rate physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and workplace self-care

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# Addressing Compassion Fatigue

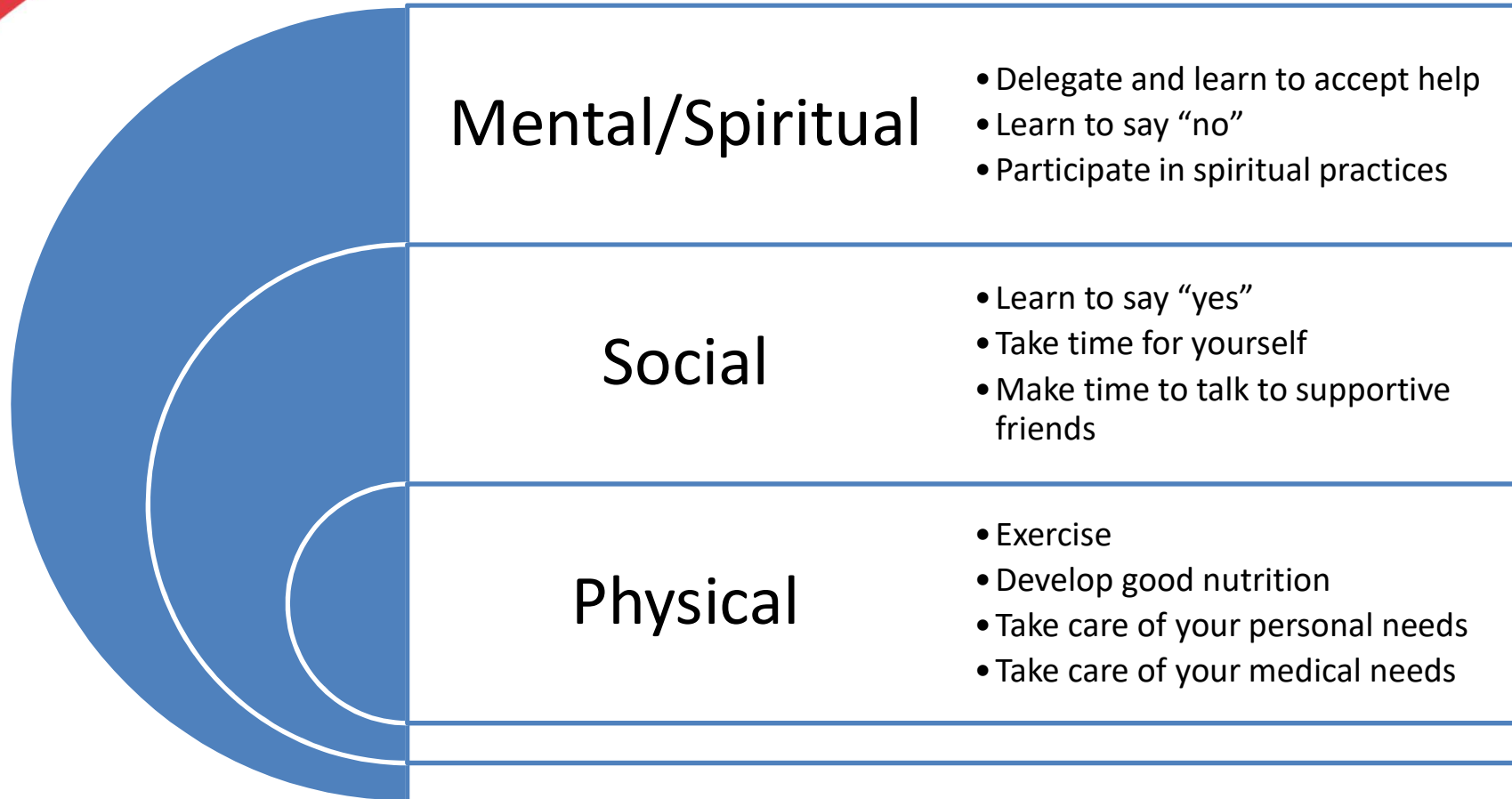
The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.

- Naomi Rachel Remen

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



# Achieving Personal Well-Being



# Personal Interventions

## My Self Care Plan



Self-care is **NOT** selfish or self-indulgent. We cannot nurture others from a dry well. We need to take care of our own needs first, then we can give from our surplus, our abundance.  
- Jennifer Louden

"A person who is humble would never be abusive or selfish; so don't abuse yourself or withhold self-love or self-care."  
- Bryant McGill

*Inspirational*  
MENTAL HEALTH

# Pennebaker's Expressive Writing Paradigm

## Getting ready to write

- Time and place with no disruptions
- Minimum of 15 minutes
- Write continuously
- Write 3-4 consecutive days

## What to write about

- A thought or worry
- A dream
- An unhealthy aspect of your life
- An avoidance



# Caregiver Compassion Fatigue

- 1) Consumed by responsibility
- 2) Emotional attachment
- 3) Helplessness, hopelessness, guilt
- 4) Uncertainty, social isolation, resentment
- 5) Effects on the family caregiver
- 6) Strategies to help

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# Conclusion

*“Dig where the ground is soft”* Chinese proverb



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