

MODULE 7: EXERCISE 2

Optional Activity and Discussion: Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers (Stamm & Figley, 1999)

In their work on *Secondary Traumatic Stress and Compassion Fatigue for Caretakers*, Stamm and Figley (1999) recognized that there is great satisfaction that comes from trauma work. They felt that in addressing their stress, caretakers needed to be able to access their satisfaction as well as their emotional fatigue.

Note to Leader: The Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers which appears here and is in the workbook can be used by the leader to further explicate the concepts. It can be used as the jumping off point for an afternoon group follow-up discussion by participants taking the test and rating themselves for Potential for Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout and Compassion Fatigue.

Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people's lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. This self-test helps you estimate your compassion status: How much at risk you are of burnout and compassion fatigue and also the degree of satisfaction with your helping others. Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your current situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last week. Then follow the scoring directions at the end of the self-test.

0-Never 1-Rarely 2-A Few Times 3-Somewhat Often 4-Often 5-Very Often

Items About You

1. I am happy.
2. I find my life satisfying.
3. I have beliefs that sustain me.
4. I feel estranged from others.
5. I find that I learn new things from those I care for.
6. I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.
7. I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.
8. I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.
9. I feel connected to others.
10. I feel calm.
11. I believe that I have a good balance between my work and my free time.
12. I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.
13. I have outburst of anger or irritability with little provocation.
14. I am the person I always wanted to be.
15. I startle easily.
16. While working with a victim, I thought about violence against the perpetrator.

17. I am a sensitive person.
18. I have flashbacks connected to those I help.
19. I have good peer support when I need to work through a highly stressful experience.
20. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.
21. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.
22. I think that I need to “work through” a traumatic experience in my life.
23. I think that I need more close friends.
24. I think that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.
25. I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.
26. Working with those I help brings me a great deal of satisfaction.
27. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.
28. I have happy thoughts about those I help and how I could help them.
29. I experience troubling dreams similar to those I help.
30. I have happy thoughts about those I help and how I could help them.
31. I have experienced intrusive thoughts of times with especially difficult people I helped.
32. I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a person I helped.
33. I am pre-occupied with more than one person I help.
34. I am losing sleep over a person I help’s traumatic experiences.
35. I have joyful feelings about how I can help the victims I work with.
36. I think that I might have been “infected” by the traumatic stress of those I help.
37. I think that I might be positively “inoculated” by the traumatic stress of those I help.
38. I remind myself to be less concerned about the well being of those I help.
39. I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.
40. I have a sense of hopelessness associated with working with those I help.
41. I have felt “on edge” about various things and I attribute this to working with certain people I help.
42. I wish that I could avoid working with some people I help.
43. Some people I help are particularly enjoyable to work with.
44. I have been in danger working with people I help.
45. I feel that some people I help dislike me personally.

Items About Being a Helper and Your Helping Environment

46. I like my work as a helper.
47. I feel like I have the tools and resources that I need to do my work as a helper.
48. I have felt weak, tired, run down as a result of my work as helper.
49. I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.
50. I have thoughts that I am a “success” as a helper.
51. I am unsuccessful at separating helping from personal life.
52. I enjoy my co-workers.
53. I depend on my co-workers to help me when I need it.
54. My co-workers can depend on me for help when they need it.
55. I trust my co-workers.
56. I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers.
57. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with technology.

- 58. I feel I am working more for the money/prestige than for personal fulfillment.
- 59. Although I have to do paperwork that I don't like, I still have time to work with those I help.
- 60. I find it difficult separating my personal life from my helper life.
- 61. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.
- 62. I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my role as a helper.
- 63. I have thought that I am a "failure" as a helper.
- 64. I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.
- 65. I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work as a helper.
- 66. I plan to be a helper for a long time.

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Scoring Instructions

Please note that research is ongoing on this scale and the following scores should be used as a guide, not confirmatory information.

- A. Be certain you respond to all items.
- B. Mark the items for scoring:
 - 1. Put an X by the following 26 items: 1-3, 5, 9-11, 14, 19, 26-27, 30, 35, 37, 43, 46-47, 50, 52-55, 57, 59, 61, 66.
 - 2. Check the following 16 items: 17, 23-25, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 56, 58, 60, 62-65.
 - 3. Circle the following 23 items: 4, 6-8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20-22, 28, 29, 31-34, 36, 38-40, and 44.
- C. Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items and note:
 - 1. Your potential for Compassion Satisfaction (x): 118 and above = extremely high potential; 100-117= high potential; 82-99= good potential; 64-81= modest potential; below 63= low potential.
 - 2. Your risk for Burnout (check): 36 or less=extremely low risk, 37-50= moderate risk; 51-75=high risk; 76-85=extremely high risk.
 - 3. Your risk for Compassion Fatigue (circle): 26 or less=extremely low risk, 27-30= low risk; 31-35=moderate risk; 36-40=high risk; 41 or more= extremely high risk