

Are YOU Suffering from Compassion Fatigue or Burnout?

The following self-test may help determine if an individual is suffering from, in particular compassion fatigue, but also burnout. However, it is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or diagnosis. Consult a physician or mental health professional to discuss the results.

(Write in the number of the best response to each of the following questions using one of the following answers: 1 – rarely or never; 2 – at times; 3 – not sure; 4 – often; 5 – very often.)

1. ____ I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.
2. ____ I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.
3. ____ I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.
4. ____ I feel estranged from others.
5. ____ I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.
6. ____ I have outbursts of anger or irritability with little provocation.
7. ____ I startle easily.
8. ____ While working with a victim I thought about violence against the person(s) who victimized.
9. ____ I am a sensitive person.
10. ____ I've had flashbacks connected to clients and families.
11. ____ I've had first-hand experiences with traumatic events in my adult life.
12. ____ I've had first-hand experiences with traumatic events in my childhood.
13. ____ I've thought that I need to "work through" a traumatic experience in my life.
14. ____ I've thought that I need more close friends.
15. ____ I've thought that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.
16. ____ I've concluded that I work too hard for my own good.

Items about clients and their families:

17. ____ I'm frightened of things traumatized people and their family have said or done to me.
18. ____ I experience troubling dreams similar to a client of mine and their family.

19. ____ I've experienced intrusive thoughts of sessions with especially difficult clients and their families.
20. ____ I've suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a client or their family.
21. ____ I'm preoccupied with more than one client and their family.
22. ____ I'm losing sleep over a client and their family's traumatic experiences.
23. ____ I've thought that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of my clients and their families.
24. ____ I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of my clients and their families.
25. ____ I've felt trapped by my work as a helper.
26. ____ I've felt a sense of hopelessness associated with working with clients and their families.
27. ____ I've felt "on edge" about various things that I attribute to working with certain clients and their families.
28. ____ I've wished that I could avoid working with some clients and their families.
29. ____ I've been in danger working with some clients and their families.
30. ____ I've felt that some of my clients and their families dislike me personally.

Items about being a helper and your work environment:

31. ____ I've felt weak, tired, and run down as a result of my work as a helper.
32. ____ I've felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.
33. ____ I am unsuccessful at separating work from personal life.
34. ____ I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers.
35. ____ I feel I am working more for the money than for personal fulfillment.
36. ____ I find it difficult separating my personal life from my work life.
37. ____ I have a sense of worthlessness, disillusionment, resentment associated with my work.
38. ____ I have thoughts that I'm a "failure" as a helper.
39. ____ I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.
40. ____ I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work life.

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS:

Make sure you responded to ALL questions. Next, circle the following 23 items: 1-8, 10-13, 17-26 and number 29. Now, ADD the numbers you wrote next to the items circled. Note your risk of compassion fatigue:

26 or less – Extremely low risk

27 to 30 – Low risk

31 to 35 – Moderate risk

36 to 40 – High risk

To determine the risk of burnout, add the numbers you wrote next to the items NOT circled.

Note the risk of burnout:

19 or less – Extremely low risk

20 to 24 – Low risk

25 to 29 – Moderate risk

30 to 40 – High risk