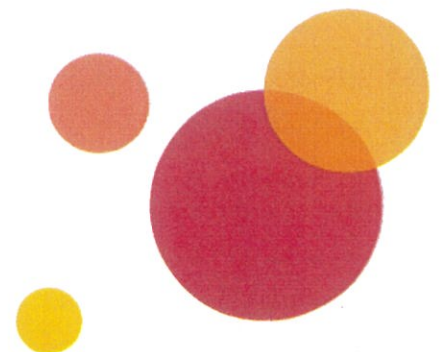


Neurobiology of Self Care

A 1-day workshop on managing the impact of working with traumatised children and young people.

Resource Booklet

Handouts & Activities

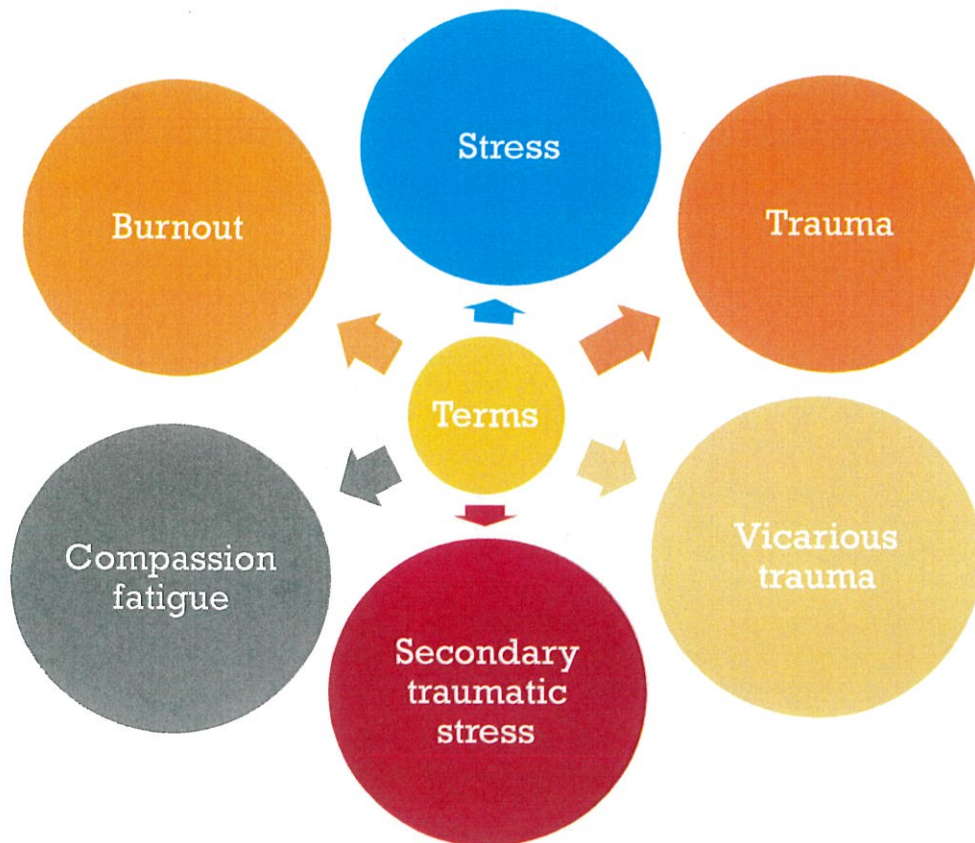


TITLE	Page
Definitions – Handout*	1
Possible Impacts – Handout.....	2
Effective Organisational Culture – Handout.....	3
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**Handouts can be copied, distributed and utilised as the Facilitator sees fit for each session.*

The Self-Assessment Tool and PROQOL Scale in particular require thoughtful consideration as to how they are used during workshops (e.g. distributed for reference only, completed partially or completed fully). Facilitators must consider the nature of the participant cohort and options/capacity for appropriate follow up if required.

***Please acknowledge authors for all tools, measures and handouts*



Stress	Something that challenges our capacity to cope
Burnout	Related to a feeling of being overloaded which is primary to client problems of chronicity and complexity, but can occur in any profession
Compassion Fatigue	fatigue, emotional distress, or apathy resulting from the constant demands of caring for others
Secondary Traumatic Stress	Adverse reactions to clients' traumatic material with symptoms that parallel PTSD
Trauma	Something that overwhelms our capacity to cope
Vicarious Trauma	Adverse reactions to clients' traumatic material which brings about change in the worker's inner experiences, physiology and/or core beliefs



	Personally	Professionally	Organisationally
Physically	Fatigued Hypervigilance Impaired immune system Rapid heartbeat Changes in breathing Sleep & appetite disturbances	Lack of concentration Use of negative coping mechanisms Difficulty in "switching off"	Increased absenteeism & sick leave Being late
Sensorily	Flashbacks Sensory overload	Dissociation	Negative sense of workplace, from a sensory perspective
Emotionally	Powerlessness Anxiety Guilt Fear Sadness Shut down Hopelessness Mistrust	Lack of satisfaction with work Diminished empathy	Apathy Detachment or over attachment to organisation
Cognitively	Self doubt Isolation from friends and family Loss of interest in a range of tasks, hobbies & life	Projection Counter transference Increased mistakes Withdrawal from colleagues	Low morale Staff conflict Irresponsible practice Negative attitude Constant questioning of work
Reflectively	Decreased self esteem Questioning core beliefs and meaning of life	Reduced reflective capacity Poor communication Decreased confidence Setting perfectionist standards	Faulty judgements Avoidance of organizational tasks

Purpose:

Articulated, provides long term direction, ensure employees understand the purpose, decisions are linked to purpose.

Empowerment:

Empower employees to contribute in the achievement of the mission; provide equal opportunity for accessing information, support and resources.

Decision making:

Involving those most directly affected by decisions; encourage input.

Belonging:

Provides development opportunities; recognises employees as significant stakeholders; encourages a 'we' spirit and a feeling of ownership of the organisation.

Trust and Confidence:

Trust employees to make wise decisions; believe employees will respond with their best efforts when appropriately recognised.

Excellence:

High standards and expectations; encourage all employees to stretch and grow; believe in a 'can do' attitude for all employees.

Recognition and Reward:

Offer incentives to encourage innovation and risk taking; invest in the potential of employees; recognise employees who achieve significant accomplishments.

Caring:

Values the wellbeing and personal concerns of employees; want employees to be open and trusting; take an interest in the professional development and career of employees.

Integrity:

Values honesty in word and action; supports commitment to personal and ethical convictions; reinforces consistent, responsible pursuit of goals.

Diversity:

Recognises and accepts differences in personality and philosophy; encourages difference in style and focus; acknowledges the need for flexibility in approaches to clients.

Wellbeing – The River of Integration (Dan Siegel)

CHAOS

Unpredictable Unstable

Coherent Energised

THE RIVER OF INTEGRATION

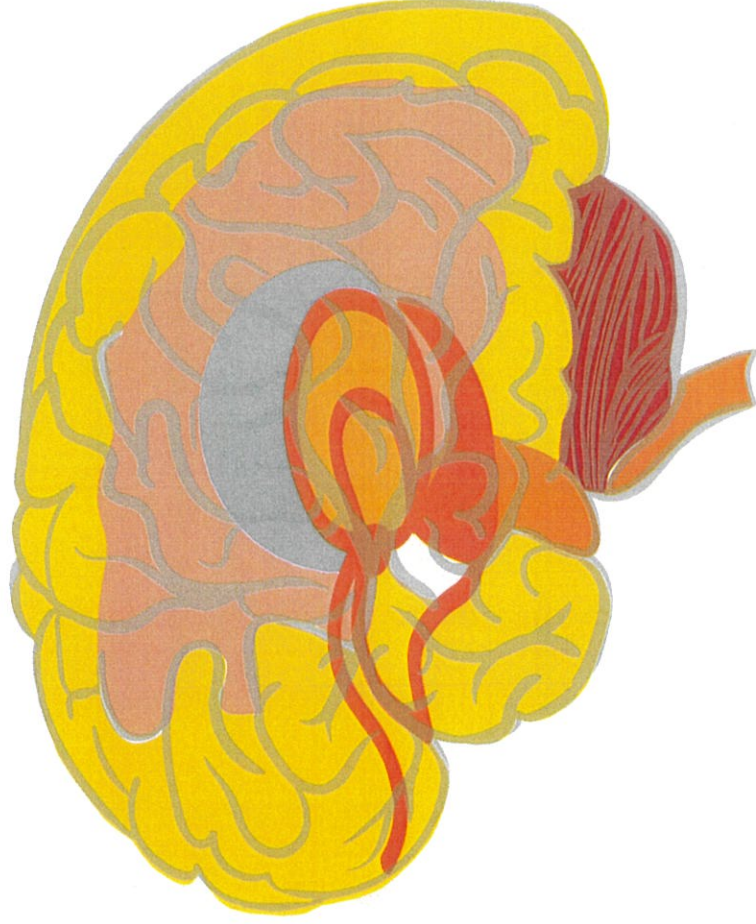
Adaptive Flexible Stable

Not Flexible Controlling

RIGIDITY

Adapted from - Siegel, D. (2009). Mindsight - The New Science of Personal Transformation. NSW, Australia: Scribe Publications.

Stress, trauma and the brain



● Neocortex

● Limbic

● Hippocampus

○ Amygdala

● Diencephalon

Hypothalamus

Thalamus

● Corpus Callosum

● Cerebellum

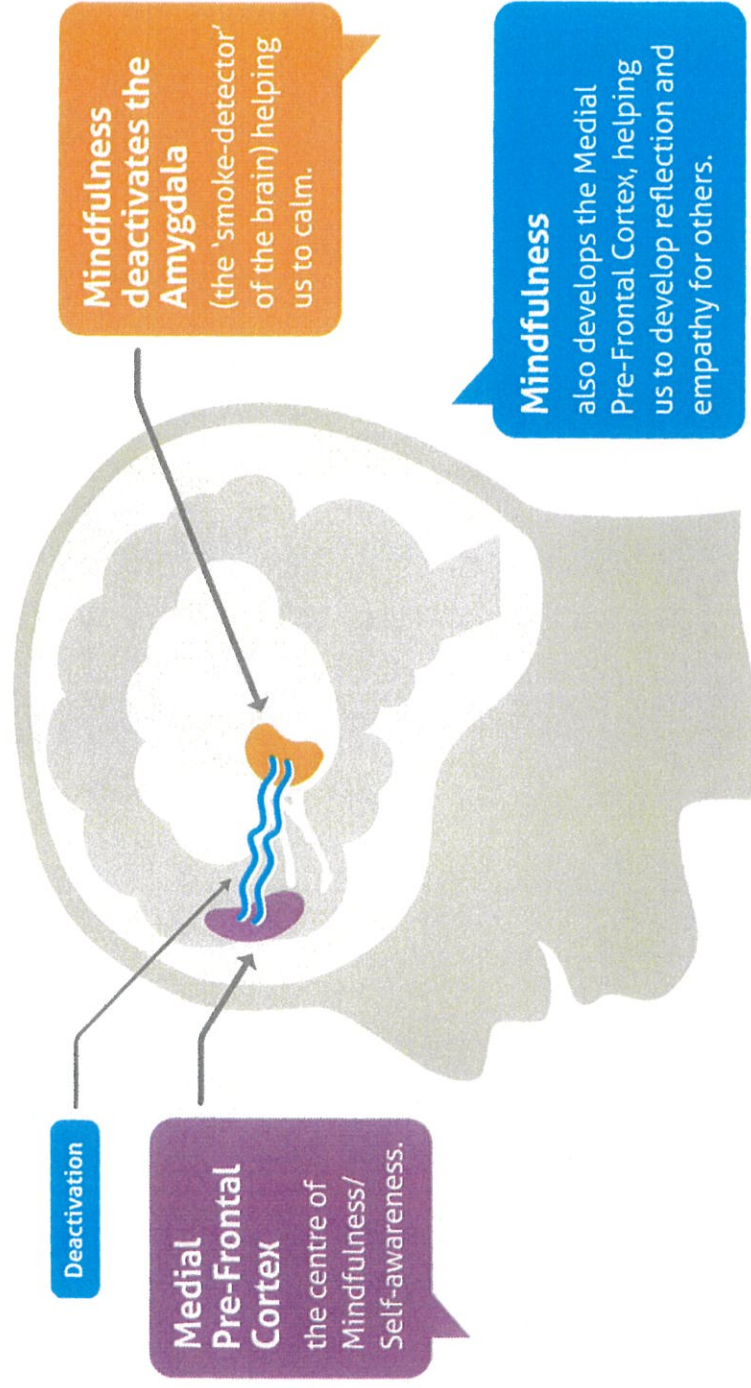
● Brainstem



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

Professional Education Services
professionals.childhood.org.au

The role of Mindfulness in Self Care



Organisational

- Poor caseload management
- Lack of reflective supervision
- Organisational culture that is not trauma-informed (impacts are not understood or acknowledged)
- Workplace culture promotes ineffective coping strategies such as minimising, denial or 'competitive stressing'
- High level unpredictability or inflexibility

Professional

- Nature of work
- Complex client relationships
- Poor boundaries
- Not accessing or making the most of supervision



Personal

- Lack of self-awareness (re levels of anxiety, stress and fatigue)
- Poor work-life boundaries and balance
- Ineffective coping strategies
- No built in self-care/wellbeing activities
- Unresolved or non-integrated personal trauma experiences
- Lack of social support
- Additional personal stressors such as health, family or finances

A Self - Assessment Tool

This tool is based on an original assessment tool developed by Stamm and Figley (Stamm, at pp.18 - 19; Figley, at pp.13 -14), and offered by them for use with mental health caregivers. The viability of using this modified tool to assess vicarious trauma with lawyers is still under assessment. It is recommended that this tool only be used as a self-assessment guide for lawyers who wish to consider their personal susceptibility to vicarious trauma. No mental health diagnosis should be made on the basis of this tool. If a lawyer has a mental health concern as a result of considering the elements of this self-assessment tool, the lawyer should consult further with a qualified mental health practitioner.

Charles Figley has said that caring deeply about others makes us emotionally vulnerable to the catastrophes that affect them. Compassion has both positive and negative aspects that may manifest themselves in your personal functioning, your work, and in your relationships with others through your work - including clients, co-workers, and adversaries. This self-test assists you in assessing your own level of stress from vicarious trauma. Try to use this tool at least monthly, as well as at the conclusion of any major piece of litigation involving death or alleged violence. Retain past tests to permit you to compare total scores as well as specific answers from test to test.

Name:

Date of Assessment:

Assign a number between 1 and 5 that comes closest to your existing feeling about yourself and your work, with 1 being rarely/never, to 5 being very often/always

Personal Satisfaction

1. _____ I am happy.
2. _____ I am satisfied with my life.
3. _____ I have beliefs that sustain me and endorse the value of the work I am doing.
4. _____ I learn new things from my clients.
5. _____ I feel connected to others.
6. _____ I have a good balance between work, personal relationships, and free time.
7. _____ I enjoy the company of some of the clients I work with.
8. _____ I enjoy my work.
9. _____ I feel that I have the tools and resources to do the job I have to do for my clients.
10. _____ I feel that I have good peer support when I need to work through a problem or issue
in my practice.
11. _____ I feel invigorated by helping a client.
12. _____ I feel joy as a result of helping a client.
13. _____ I have thoughts that I am a success as a helper of my clients.
14. _____ I enjoy my peers and co-workers.
15. _____ I feel that I can rely on my peers and co-workers for support and understanding.
16. _____ I have confidence in the skills of my co-workers.
17. _____ I trust my co-workers.
18. _____ I feel that I am able to keep up with new developments in the health care profession
for the benefit of my clients.
19. _____ I feel that I am able to keep up with current best practise for better serving clients.
20. _____ I feel that my co-workers have confidence in me as a person.
21. _____ I feel that my co-workers have confidence in my skills.
22. _____ I plan to do this kind of work for a long time to come.

Over 95: extremely high potential for work satisfaction; 85 - 95: high potential for work satisfaction; 75 - 85: good potential for work satisfaction; 55 - 75: some potential for work satisfaction; Below 55: Irregular and inconsistent potential for work satisfaction.

How you feel about how you do your Work?

23. _____ I am a sensitive person.
24. _____ I have thought that I need more close friends (people that know me and are supportive of me).
25. _____ I have thought that there is no one to talk to about my highly stressful experiences whom I can trust and who will understand the kind of stress that I will be talking about.
26. _____ I work too hard for my own good.
27. _____ I have felt on edge about professional matters, and have attributed this to work with one or two specific clients.
28. _____ I wish I could avoid working with some clients.
29. _____ I have felt weak, tired, and run down as a result of my work.
30. _____ I have felt depressed as a result of my work.
31. _____ I am unsuccessful in separating work from personal life.
32. _____ I feel little compassion for or confidence in the skills of my co-workers.

33. _____ I have thoughts that I am a failure in my work.
34. _____ I have a sense of worthlessness, disillusionment, or resentment in my work.
35. _____ I feel that I am distracted by bureaucratic and unimportant tasks of practice and that my skills and work would be better applied to direct client care.
36. _____ I feel that I am not on the path to achieving my life goals.

Risk of Burnout scale: 34 or less: low risk for burnout; 35 - 51: moderate risk for burnout; 52 - 68: high risk for burnout; Over 68: extremely high risk for burnout.

How you feel about yourself and your work because of your clients?

37. _____ I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings or ideas that remind me of a disturbing experience.
38. _____ I find myself avoiding certain activity or situations because they remind me of a disturbing experience.
39. _____ I have gaps in my memory about disturbing events.
40. _____ I feel estranged from others (clients, co-workers, family, family equivalents).
41. _____ I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.
42. _____ I have outbursts of anger or frustration, and experience irritability, with little provocation.
43. _____ I startle easily.
44. _____ While working with a client I thought (even momentarily) about violence as a solution to his/her interpersonal difficulty.
45. _____ I have had flashbacks and other intrusive recollections connected to my clients.
46. _____ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.
47. _____ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.
48. _____ I have had to "work through" an event in my life that I believed to be traumatic.
49. _____ I am disturbed by something a client has said or done to me, and wonder whether it will be repeated by other clients.
50. _____ I experience dreams or intrusive thoughts that are similar to those of a client.
51. _____ I have experienced intrusive thoughts of a session with a particularly difficult or troubling client.
52. _____ I have involuntarily recalled traumatic personal experiences while assisting a client.
53. _____ I am preoccupied with more than one client.
54. _____ I am losing sleep over a client's traumatic experiences.
55. _____ I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of my clients.
56. _____ I have felt trapped in my work with these clients.
57. _____ I have felt a sense of hopelessness about my professional work when working with my client.
58. _____ I have put myself or others in danger for the purpose of working with a client.
59. _____ I have thoughts that I need to demonstrate and prove my skills to others.
60. _____ I have thoughts that I have no control over the results of my work.
61. _____ I am planning to leave this kind of work.

Risk of vicarious traumatization manifesting itself in a disorder.

Any level of risk may manifest itself in a relationship upset or distraction with the client:

- Under 26: low risk of vicarious traumatization;
- 26 - 52: moderate risk of vicarious traumatization;
- Over 52: likely risk of vicarious traumatization manifesting itself in reduced client service and high risk of developing into a disorder if uncorrected.

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.

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, place your personal scores below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

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 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, 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.

Burnout _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of Compassion Fatigue (CF). It 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 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 43, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 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.

Secondary Traumatic Stress _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other’s trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example, field work in a war or area of civil violence, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others’ traumatic events as a result of your work, for example, as a therapist or an emergency worker, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of 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 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, 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.

WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test so you understand the interpretation for you. To find your score on **each section**, total the questions listed on the left and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

3. _____
 6. _____
 12. _____
 16. _____
 18. _____
 20. _____
 22. _____
 24. _____
 27. _____
 30. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are "reverse scored." If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. "I am happy" tells us more about

- *1. _____ = _____
 *4. _____ = _____
 8. _____
 10. _____
 *15. _____ = _____
 *17. _____ = _____
 19. _____
 21. _____
 26. _____
 *29. _____ = _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	So my score equals	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

You Wrote	Change to
	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

the effects of helping when you are *not* happy so you reverse the score

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

2. _____
 5. _____
 7. _____
 9. _____
 11. _____
 13. _____
 14. _____
 23. _____
 25. _____
 28. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	
T	
U	
V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

THE ABC'S OF SELF-CARE AND STRESS REDUCTION

<https://www.hartsteinpsychological.com/abcs-of-self-care-stress-reduction>

Science shows taking time to tune in to your own needs leads to emotional stability, a stronger immune system and better relationships with others. Many people forget to take care of themselves before helping others, but it is vital. In the time it takes you to scroll through your social media feed or read an article about a celebrity, you could have been practicing self-care (and yes, sometimes trashy magazines count as a self-care practice).

TWO TYPES OF SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

You are likely already engaging in some self-care activities, so keep up the good work! Remember, self-care isn't always "luxurious" or relaxing. There is boring self-care too, but this counts and can have so many benefits to your mind and body. I like to put self-care activities in two categories. There is **instant self-care**, which is the stuff that feels good while you're doing it or right afterward, like playing with a puppy or taking a bath. The other type is **boring self-care** like organizing your junk drawer (so you can finally find what you're looking for). These activities reduce emotional vulnerability, improve confidence and help you feel in control.

I've created an alphabetical list of many ways to incorporate self-care activities into your life no matter how busy you are. It's important to be mindful of the things you are already doing that count as self-care activities, from taking a nap to scheduling your next doctor appointment. Self-care is important to your wellbeing so make sure you're keeping track of what you are doing to ensure you're getting enough emotional self-care.

THE ABC'S OF SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES LIST

Use the alphabetical list of self-care activities below to pick one or two activities that you want to try

today. Aim for one each day to start a self-care practice and improve your mental health.

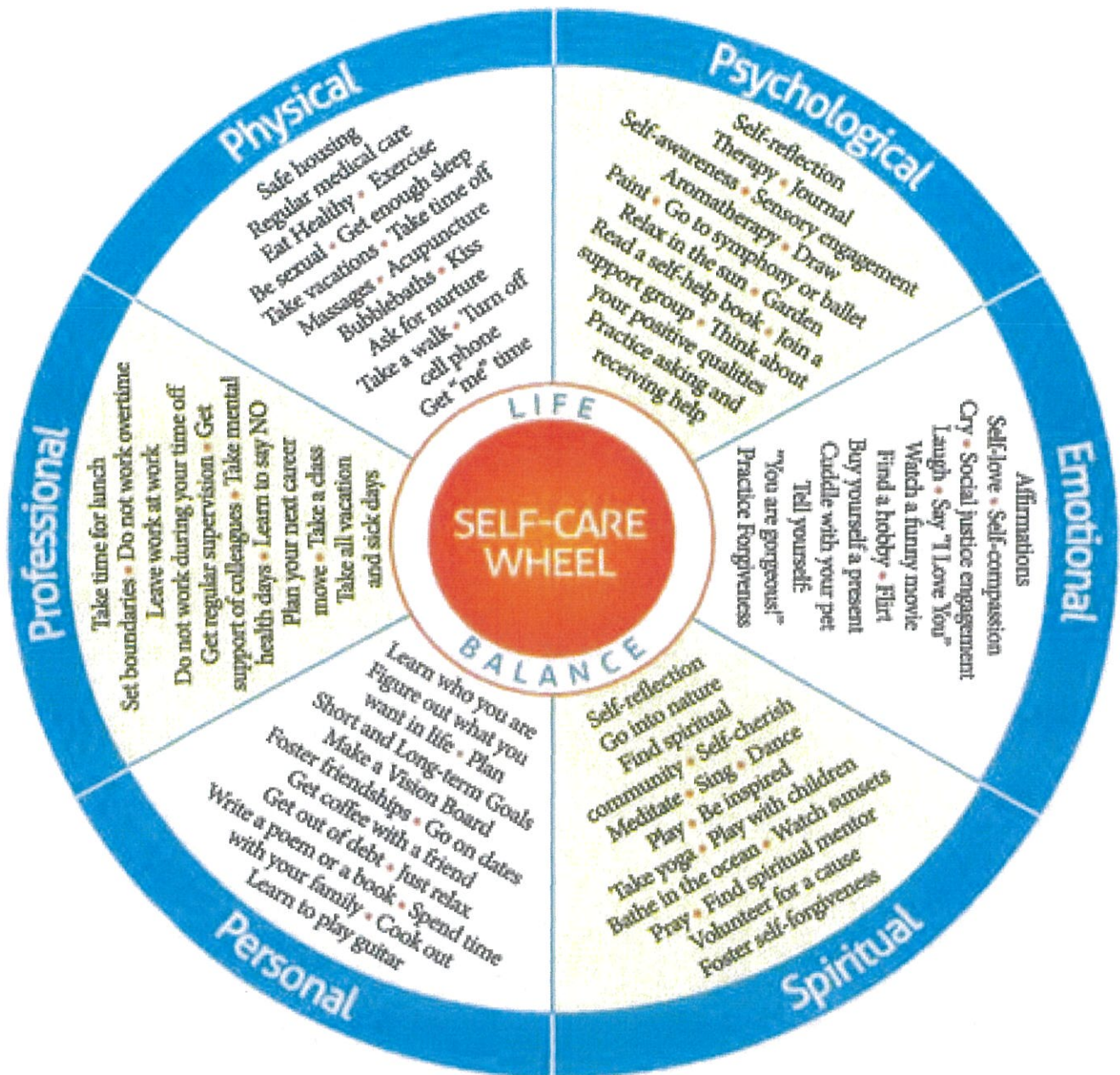
- A. **Airplane mode.** Allow yourself time to disconnect from your phone. Try putting it in airplane mode for 15-20 minutes (you can set the alarm, so you don't forget) and engage fully in your life.
- B. **Bend and stretch.** Take a minute to tune into your body and place your attention on areas that need a little TLC.
- C. **Clean up** an area of your home. Take five minutes to organize that sock drawer that causes you to feel frazzled in the morning. Taking time to help your future self feel less stressed is a huge deal.
- D. **Drink more water** and keep track of how much you are getting today. Make an effort to help your body detox and get hydrated.
- E. **Edit who you follow** on social media. Take five minutes to delete people or profiles that trigger you. Also, **exercise** for a few minutes—even five minutes of sweating activates endorphins.
- F. **Find a deal.** It feels good, makes you feel in control of your life and saves you money. Go online for a few minutes before you head out for holiday shopping or before buying anything. See if you can find a coupon or discount code.
- G. **Give away something.** It feels good to give to others, doesn't it? Donate your time, some gently used coats or toys to a shelter in your neighborhood or a few dollars to an organization.
- H. **Hug someone**, a friend, an animal or yourself for a full 10 seconds. Oxytocin is released when you are feeling love—this is a chemical in your body that grounds you and helps you feel safe.
- I. **Intense exercise** for two to five minutes. Exercising for a short period will help your body get rid of negative energy. Try walking at a fast pace, doing jumping jacks, or try the '7 Minute Workout.' Exercise naturally releases endorphins, which will help combat any uncomfortable emotions like anger, anxiety, or sadness.

- J. **Join a group.** An online forum that offers support for something you're struggling with, a community cause that is important to you, even a book club brings connection and a new activity to look forward to.
- K. **Kundalini Yoga.** Try a short Kundalini yoga video on YouTube, their meditations often help you feel more energized and self-aware.
- L. **Listen to your body**—what does it need? More veggies? Some H2O? How about vitamins? When you tune in your body, it tells you what's up—respect it and it will respect you. Or, listen to soothing music or a guided meditation to help your mind get clear so you can listen to your body.
- M. **Meal prep** a few days ahead of time. Chop, package, freeze or order items so you can enjoy the process of cooking or eating rather than stressing out about time or the items you forgot to buy.
- N. **"No."** It is a complete sentence and it's a major act of self-care. It's hard to do and many people have a hard time putting themselves first and feel uncomfortable flexing their assertiveness muscle, but it is key to building self-esteem. When you take on too much, slide into the role of people-pleaser or you simply don't want to do something, saying no is important.
- O. **Organize something.** Take a minute to clean out a drawer, your bag or arrange a corner of your home so that it's pleasing to your eyes.
- P. **Play with toys, games or crafts.** Activate your creative side and honor your inner child.
- Q. **Quiet time.** Spend five minutes without distractions and tune in. Your brain will benefit big time and your nervous system becomes more regulated (less anxiety and more happy vibes fill your body). Or, **quit something.** Is there a membership you are paying for that you never use? Quit it and save some money.
- R. **Read a real book** (or magazine). Remember the smell of paper and holding the weight of a book? This engages your senses and helps you feel grounded. Do this for a few minutes and see how you feel.
- S. **Schedule appointments or set reminders** so that you are coping ahead with schedule changes and routines. Make the dentist appointment, set up a reminder for your credit card, do something proactive for your mental and physical health.
- T. **Try a delivery service.** Amazon, local supermarkets, and many online retailers have made life easier with scheduled deliveries (weekly or monthly), and many are less expensive than traditional shopping. Save gas, time and a trip to the store.
- U. **Use the good towels or fancy condiments.** Don't wait for the guests or the 'right time' to use the items that you've been saving. You deserve to feel special today, not tomorrow.
- V. **Validate yourself.** Remind yourself how well you are doing. Give yourself some credit.
- W. **Write out your intentions** and spend a few minutes with paper and a pencil. When you write the old school way, your brain remembers and activates the creative side of your brain.
- X. **XOXO.** Show yourself or someone in your life some love.
- Y. **Yap away.** Talking can transform your mood and help you feel connected to others. Call a friend or FaceTime with a family member. The connection is vital for self-care so make sure you're talking and taking time to listen too.
- Z. **Zen out.** Take a meditation break, do some deep breathing, light the incense and carve out a few minutes to just be with yourself.

Which activities for self-care will you try this week? Remember you must take time to put yourself first, schedule it, plan ahead and make sure you are giving your body and mind the love and support it needs.

Authored by: Emily Roberts, MA LPC

SELF-CARE WHEEL



This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013).

Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide.

www.OlgaPhoenix.com

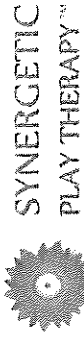
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Nervous System Symptoms of Regulation and Dys-regulation

All symptoms of dys-regulation arise out of mis-perceptions of the events in our lives. When we change our perceptions, we change the symptoms in our nervous system. It is wise to master the art of how to change our perceptions and how to manage the symptoms that arise in our bodies to help return us to a more regulated/ventral state.

Sympathetic Response-
Freeze, Flight, Fight
Hyper-arousal Symptoms

Parasympathetic/Ventral Vagal
Response- Regulated Symptoms
(Mindful/"Attached to Self")

Parasympathetic/Dorsal Vagal
Response- Collapse
Hypo-arousal Symptoms

Hyper-alert

Think logically/clearly

Helplessness

Hyper-vigilant

Able to make conscious choices

Appear life-less

Increased heart rate

Able to make eye contact

Non-expressive

Defensive

Display a wide range of emotional expression

Numbing

"Pounding" sensation in the head

Feel "grounded"

Lack of motivation

Anxious

Able to notice breath

Lethargic/Tired

Excessive Motoric Activity

Sleep Cycles Stable

Dulled capacity to feel significant events

Overwhelmed, Disorganized

Poised

Emotional constriction

Highly irritable

Internal awareness of both mind and body

Depression

Uncontrollable bouts of rage

"In the body"

Isolation

Aggressive

Dissociation

Able to communicate verbally in a clear manner

Dissociation

Synergetic Play Therapy™ - Regulation Activities

Listed below are just some examples of activities that can be used to help regulate a dys-regulated nervous system. It is wise to do these activities pro-actively, as well as in moments of dys-regulation. It is also important to follow the body's innate wisdom back to a regulated/ventral state. These activities are important to be done alone AND with someone.

- Run, jump, spin, dance with pauses to take deep breaths- you can make a game and have child jump high to touch something high on a wall or in a door frame
- Run, jump, etc and crash into something soft (i.e jump on a bed and crash repeatedly)
- Bounce on a yoga ball
- Roll across the floor back and forth
- Sit in a chair and push up with your arms (as if trying to get out of the chair)...keep some resistance
- Massages
- Deep pressure on arms and legs (you can slowly apply pressure down arms and legs in a long stroking motion)
- Eat (particularly something crunchy)
- Drink through a straw
- Take a bath or shower
- Wrap up in a blanket and snuggle (a little tightly for some pressure)- of course, do this safely.
- March or sing during transitions
- Play Mozart music in the background during challenging times of the day if in hyper-arousal
- Play Hard Rock/Fast/Bass music if in hypo-arousal
- Carry heavy things or push heavy things around
- Do isometrics (wall pushups or push hands together (looks like you are praying))
- Walk quickly
- Run up and down steps
- Shake head quickly
- Hang upside down off of a bed or couch
- Play sports
- "Doodle" on paper (this one can be a bit more distracting, but sometimes works)
- Hold or fidget a Koosh ball, rubber band, straw, clay
- Rub gently or vigorously on your skin or clothing
- Put a cold or hot wash cloth on face
- Dim the lights if in hyper-arousal
- Turn on the lights if in hypo-arousal
- Read a book
- Swing
- Learn about "Brain Gym" - tons of ideas
- Yoga
- Snuggle
- Dance
- Move, move, move- any way that it feels good to your body
- Describe what is happening in your body out loud- "My tummy is going in circles", "My legs feel heavy", etc...
- Breathe, breathe, breathe- make sure that your inhalation is the same length as your exhalation-