

The ABCs of Addressing VT

Awareness

Being attuned to one's needs, limits, emotions, and resources. Heed all levels of awareness and sources of information, cognitive, intuitive, and somatic. Practice mindfulness and acceptance.

Balance

Maintaining balance among activities, especially work, play, and rest. Inner balance allows attention to all aspects of oneself.

Connection

Connections to oneself, to others, and to something larger. Communication is part of connection and breaks the silence of unacknowledged pain. These connections offset isolation and increase validation and hope.

In Three Realms of our Lives

- 1-Professional
- 2-Organizational
- 3-Personal

VT Intervention Strategies for Each Realm of the Helper's Life

Professional

- Supervision/consultation
- Scheduling: client load and distribution
- Balance and variety of tasks
- Education: giving and receiving
- Work Space

Organizational

- Collegial support
- Forums to address VT
- Supervision availability
- Respect for clinicians and clients
- Resources: mental health benefits, space, time

Personal

- Making personal life a priority
- Personal psychotherapy
- Leisure activities: physical, creative, spontaneous, relaxation
- Spiritual well-being
- Nurture all aspects of yourself: emotional, physical, spiritual, interpersonal, creative, artistic
- Attention to health

In All Realms

- Mindfulness and self-awareness
- Self-nurturance
- Balance: work, play, rest
- Meaning and connection

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS	
<p>COGNITIVE</p> <p>Confusion in thinking Difficulty making decisions Disorientation</p>	<p>PHYSICAL</p> <p>Excessive sweating Dizzy spells Increased heart rate Elevated blood pressure Rapid breathing</p>
<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <p>Emotional shock Anger Grief Depression Feeling overwhelmed Hopelessness/helplessness</p>	<p>BEHAVIORAL</p> <p>Changes in ordinary behavior patterns Changes in eating Decreased personal hygiene Withdrawal from others Prolonged silences</p>

Index of Clinical Stress (Abel, 1991)

Name: _____ Date: _____

This questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about the amount of personal stress that you experience. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

- 1=None of the time
 - 2=Very little
 - 3=A little of the time
 - 4=Some of the time
 - 5=A good part of the time
 - 6=Most of the time
 - 7=All of the time
-

1. ____ I feel extremely tense.
 2. ____ I feel very jittery.
 3. ____ I feel like I want to scream.
 4. ____ I feel overwhelmed.
 5. ____ I feel very relaxed.
 6. ____ I feel so anxious I want to cry.
 7. ____ I feel so stressed that I would like to hit something.
 8. ____ I feel very calm and peaceful.
 9. ____ I feel like I am stretched to the breaking point.
 10. ____ It is very hard for me to relax.
 11. ____ It is very easy for me to fall asleep at night.
 12. ____ I feel an enormous sense of pressure on me.
 13. ____ I feel like my life is going very smoothly.
 14. ____ I feel very panicked.
 15. ____ I feel like I am on the verge of total collapse.
 16. ____ I feel like I am losing control of my life.
 17. ____ I feel that I am near the breaking point.
 18. ____ I feel wound up like a coiled spring.
 19. ____ I feel that I can't keep up with the demands on me.
 20. ____ I feel very much behind in my work.
 21. ____ I feel tense and angry with those around me.
 22. ____ I feel I must race from one task to the next.
 23. ____ I feel that I just can't keep up with everything.
 24. ____ I feel as tight as a drum.
 25. ____ I feel very much on edge.
-

Score: ____

MISSION STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS (Alternate Short Version)

On your journey toward wellness and recovery from Compassion Fatigue we invite you to explore your early memories of being a caring person, how this led you to become a working caregiver, what that means to you and what keeps you from achieving your ideal in your work.

Please consider the following categories and try to answer them being in general or as specific as you wish. This is an exploration and therefore there can be no right or wrong approach or answer. Follow your instincts on this one and they will send you in just the right direction.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*What is it about you that led you toward helping others?

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

*What are the values that you will never compromise in your work with clients?

COMMITMENTS

*What are you committed to offer clients? What are you committed to offer yourself?

STRENGTHS: Clients & your own

*What do you believe about your clients? What about your own strengths?

YOUR IDEAL

*If you were to become your ideal caregiver how would life look to you?

ROADBLOCKS AND BAD TRAFFIC

*What impediments keep you from this ideal?

These are just some questions designed to stir your thinking on this topic. Give yourself some time to think about your personal Mission Statement, then take the plunge and commit your thoughts to paper. However, make sure to offer yourself creative license in this endeavor. Remember, there is no right or wrong Mission Statement and, chances are, it will be in continual evolution as long as you practice in this field. This is a wonderful gift to give yourself and can be a source of empowerment and inspiration for you in the future. Enjoy.

PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT (Alternate Short Version)

USE AS MUCH SPACE AS YOU NEED!

YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*What is it about you that led you toward helping others?

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

*What are the values that you will never compromise in your work with clients?

COMMITMENTS

*What are you committed to offer clients? What are you committed to offer yourself?

STRENGTHS: Clients & your own

*What do you believe about your clients? What about your own strengths?

YOUR IDEAL

*If you were to become your ideal caregiver how would life look to you?

ROADBLOCKS AND BAD TRAFFIC

*What impediments keep you from this ideal?

Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers

Adapted with permission from Figley, C.R., (1995). *Compassion Fatigue*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
© B. Hudnall Stamm, Traumatic Stress Research Group, 1995 -1998 <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~bhstamm/index.htm>.

This form may be freely copied as long as (a) authors are credited, (b) no changes are made, & (c) it is not sold.

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. Print a copy of this test so that you can fill out the numbers and keep them for your use. Using a pen or pencil, 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.

Silencing Response Scale (Baranowsky, 1996, 1998)

INSTRUCTIONS: This scale was developed to help caregiver's identify specific communication struggles in their work. Choose the number that best reflects your experience using the following rating system, where 1 signifies rarely or never and 10 means very often. Answer all items to the best of your ability.

1=Rarely/Never -----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9----- 10=Always
Sometimes

- (1)___ Are there times when you believe your client(s) repeats emotional issues you feel were already covered?
- (2)___ Do you get angry with client(s)?
- (3)___ Are there times when you react with sarcasm toward your client(s)?
- (4)___ Are there times when you fake interest?
- (5)___ Do you feel that listening to certain experiences of your client(s) will not help?
- (6)___ Do you feel that letting your client talk about their trauma will hurt them?
- (7)___ Do you feel that listening to your client's experiences will hurt you?
- (8)___ Are there times that you blame your client for the bad things that have happened to them?
- (9)___ Are there times when you are unable to believe what your client is telling you because what they are describing seems overly traumatic?
- (10)___ Are there times when you feel numb, avoidant or apathetic before meeting with certain clients?
- (11)___ Do you consistently support certain clients in avoiding important therapeutic material despite ample time to address their concerns?
- (12)___ Are there times when sessions do not seem to be going well or the client's treatment progress appears to be blocked?
- (13)___ At times, you become negatively aroused when a client is angry with you.
- (14)___ Are there times when you cannot remember what a client has just said?
- (15)___ Are there times when you cannot focus on what a client is saying?

TOTAL = _____