

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Developed by

SHAWN GOLDBERG

PSYCHOLOGIST

BAppSci (Psychology) PGDip (Psychology) Assoc MAPS

Table of Content

	Page
Introduction	1
My Story	2
Definitions	3
Burnout	3
Compassion Fatigue	4
Vicarious Trauma	5
Self-Care	5
Coping with Stress	6
Self-Awareness Exercise	8
Arousal Reduction Exercise	9
Breathing Exercises	10
Eight Dimensions of Well-Being Model	13
Healthy Coping Strategies	15
How to Decrease your Vulnerability to Compassion Fatigue	16
Self-Assessment Tool	19
Setting Goals	34
Articles	38

Introduction

This toolkit is written for Health Care professionals who have chosen to dedicate a lifetime to helping others. It attempts to recognise the unique nature of assisting clients who present with anxieties of mortality, a traumatic history, or mental illness, just to name a few.

As we are social beings, it is sometimes difficult to defend ourselves from the pain and distress of others. Even more so being in our chosen health professions.

The fundamental reason for working in our field is a desire to help others. The motivation to help others is altruistic and requires a high level of empathy. However, it is that empathic response that creates the greatest risk and vulnerability to *stress, burnout, vicarious trauma and/or compassion fatigue*.

Self-awareness, assessment and self-care are critical to preventing a toxic, unhealthy build-up of the negative and invasive effects of your work. The bad news is no one is immune to these effects. We are all human and naturally feed off the emotional state of others around us. The transformation of the negative effects can be subtle or pronounced, positive or negative. There may be an awakening of feelings, including the passion for social justice, the joy of helping those in need, or a sense of connection and belonging to others. The negative aspect of the work can lead some to struggle with finding and maintaining a healthy balance in their life.

This Self-Care Toolkit provides the definitions of the terms above, assessment tools to help identify signs of wear, practical stress relieving exercises to perform daily, and a self-care planning tool.

My Story - What influenced me to focus on Self-Care?

In 2007 I was invited to be a support counsellor for the Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Workshop Weekend. The facilitator Mike Lew, an internationally renowned trauma therapist, required two support counsellors. I eagerly volunteered to the exciting challenge. At the time I had been working as a therapist for six years.

My interest in this weekend workshop was driven from my work in Addiction and Trauma fields. Approximately two thirds of my clients were adult survivors of childhood abuse. This workshop was an opportunity to gain extensive experience and contribute my skills.

As a support counsellor my only instructions from Mike Lew were to provide support for those in need. I wasn't given a clear job description. Throughout the weekend I was approached by the participants for debriefing. We would chat in the hallways, over a meal, between programs, and in the middle of the night. The intensity of this experience quickly became overwhelming for me. I felt exposed and in deep water. This was out of my comfort zone. The boundaries I held in the therapy room with my clients in my *day job* had all but disappeared. I was used to the security of my time limited sessions and familiar consulting rooms.

Despite these daunting feelings I felt nothing but admiration for the participants. Their rawness, openness and desire to heal old wounds was truly inspiring. I distinctly remember the image of a man who wanted so desperately to tell his wife that he loved her. But his desire to say "*I love you*" was marred by his traumatic childhood experience. While being sexually abused by his parents, he was forced to utter those words to them. By the end of the weekend workshop he felt ready to share his feelings with his wife. A shaken man, he practiced singing a song in front of us that he would share with her. There was not a dry eye in the house. Once finished he stood bowed, sobbing, exhausted. Without speaking we silently approached and each placed a hand on this tender man. It was at that moment which toppled my last defence.

That image of our hands silently supporting this man resonated with me for months and triggered *compassion fatigue* and *burnout*. The road to recovery from this experience was long, but allowed me to develop a keen awareness of my triggers, symptoms and solutions. In turn, this enabled me to work through my stress and identify the signs of *compassion fatigue* and *burnout*.

I would like to share my knowledge with you, as I feel that this could help you in the future.

Definitions

Burnout

Background

Health professionals caring for seriously ill/dying patients and their families are frequently exposed to distressing emotional situations and profound suffering. Lack of attention to health providers' stress responses to this suffering can lead to burnout, which has consequences for the provider and his/her interpersonal relationships.

Definitions

Burnout is a . . .

- "Psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (Maslach 1982).
- "State of mental and/or physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress" (Girdin 1996).

Common features

Burnout is characterised by 3 dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism / depersonalisation, and inefficiency.

- Exhaustion reflects the stress dimension of burnout.
- Depersonalisation is an attempt to distance oneself from the client by developing an indifference or cynical attitude when feeling exhausted and discouraged.
- Decreased effectiveness and work performance result from negative attitudes and behaviours.
- These factors combined interfere with one's effectiveness or efficiency at work.
- Burnout manifests in persons with no previous history of psychopathology.

Situational Risk Factors

- Demands of solo practice, long work hours, time pressure, and complex patients.
- Lack of control over schedules, pace of work, and interruptions.
- Lack of support for work/life balance from colleagues and/or spouse.
- Isolation due to gender or cultural differences.
- Work overload and its effect on home life.
- Feeling poorly managed and resourced.
- Managerial responsibility.
- Dealing with patients' suffering.

Individual Risk Factors

- At risk earlier in career
- Lack of Life-partner
- Attribution of achievement to chance or others rather than one's own abilities
- Passive, defensive approach to stress
- Lack of involvement in daily activities
- Lack of sense of control over events
- Not open to change

Compassion Fatigue or Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder

Definition

- Compassion fatigue refers to a physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue or exhaustion that takes over a person and causes decline in his/her ability to experience joy or to feel and care for others. (Figley, 1995; Friedman, 2002).
- Compassion fatigue is also synonymous with secondary traumatic stress disorder.
- Compassion fatigue is a one-way street in which individuals are giving out a great deal of energy and compassion to others over a period of time, yet aren't able to get enough personal support to reassure themselves that the world is a hopeful place.
- It's this constant outputting of compassion and caring over time that can lead to these feelings of total exhaustion (Figley, 1995; Friedman, 2002).

Causes

- Compassion fatigue comes from a variety of sources. It often affects those working in care-giving professions such as nurses, physicians, mental health workers, clergymen and child welfare practitioners.
- It can affect people in any kind of situation or setting where they're doing a great deal of care giving and expending emotional and physical energy day in and day out.
- It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized person. (Figley, 1995; Friedman, 2002)

Who is at Risk?

- Although those in the health care field and mental health professions are most at risk for developing compassion fatigue, it is not limited to those arenas. Any caregiver is susceptible. (Figley, 2002; Figley, 1995, Friedman, 2002)
- It can affect family carers. Such as taking care of a family member during a crisis period when a higher level of empathy is required. Or during a long-term illness that requires constant attention to their needs with compassion and sensitivity.

Symptoms

Compassion fatigue symptoms can present themselves as biological, psychological and/or social.

Biological/Physical - Sympathetic and parasympathetic arousal (prolonged stress leads to immuno-suppression, and frequent illness).

Psychological - Excessive self-concern, aloneness, powerlessness, despair, and stagnation.

Social - Rejection, separation, lost control, giving up, destruction, emptiness, and disintegration. (Friedman, 2002; Figley, 1995)

Vicarious Traumatization

Is a term coined by McCann and Pearlman (1990). It refers to the transmission of traumatic stress through observation and/or hearing others' stories of traumatic events. This results in a shift / distortion to the caregiver's perceptual and meaning systems.

"Vicarious traumatization is the transformation of the therapists' or helpers' inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with survivor clients and their trauma material. It refers to the cumulative transformative effect on the helper working with the survivors of traumatic life event."

(Saakvitne & Perlman, 1996)

Self-Care

Self-Care describes the activities undertaken by individuals and the wider community in order to improve health, prevent disease and manage illness. It encompasses a broad spectrum of activities and decisions that people make for themselves to maintain a good level of physical and mental health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides us with the following definition of self-care:

"Self-care refers to activities individuals, families and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing health, preventing disease, limiting illness and restoring health. These activities are derived from knowledge and skills from the pool of both professional and lay experience. They are undertaken by lay people on their own behalf either separately or in participative collaboration with professionals. Seeking professional advice in Self Care is part of the continuum of trying to maintain good health and prevent disease."

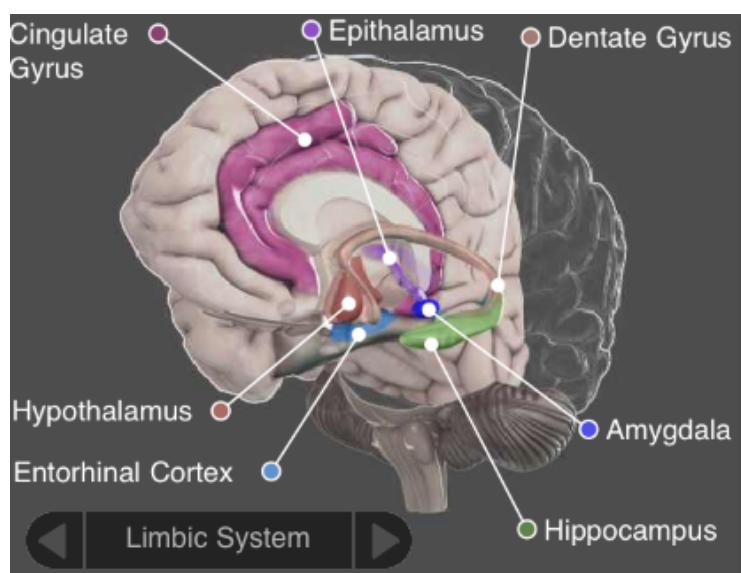
COPING WITH STRESS



INTRODUCTION TO STRESS:

- Stress is the body's normal response to any demand, an outgrowth of the “fight or flight” response. Everyone experiences stress, but reacts differently to it.
- Under stress, the body releases hormones, adrenaline and hydrocortisone, which help turn off some functions, including our immune system, and turn on short-term energy reserves. After the stress is gone, the body returns to normal.
- Positive stressors – stress can provide for necessary survival mechanisms, as well as provide extra momentum and boost productivity. Examples include preparing a lecture for a class, searching for a new home, or planning for a holiday
- Negative stress can either be acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term). Too often we don't turn off our stress mechanism that takes its toll on physical and mental health.

The Brain and Stress



The Limbic System otherwise known as the *reptilian brain* is at the centre of our stress reaction.

Positive Stress	Negative Stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivates • Is short-term • Feels exciting • Improves performance • Is pleasant and beneficial • Is vital for physical and mental fitness • Focuses energies and sharpens the mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't fade, but builds • Can lead to mental and physical problems, such as loss of concentration, irritability, depression, anxiety, headaches, tight muscles, fatigue • Can be curbed with relaxation, positive "self-talk", and healthy boundaries and lifestyle

SEVERAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT STRESS LEVELS:

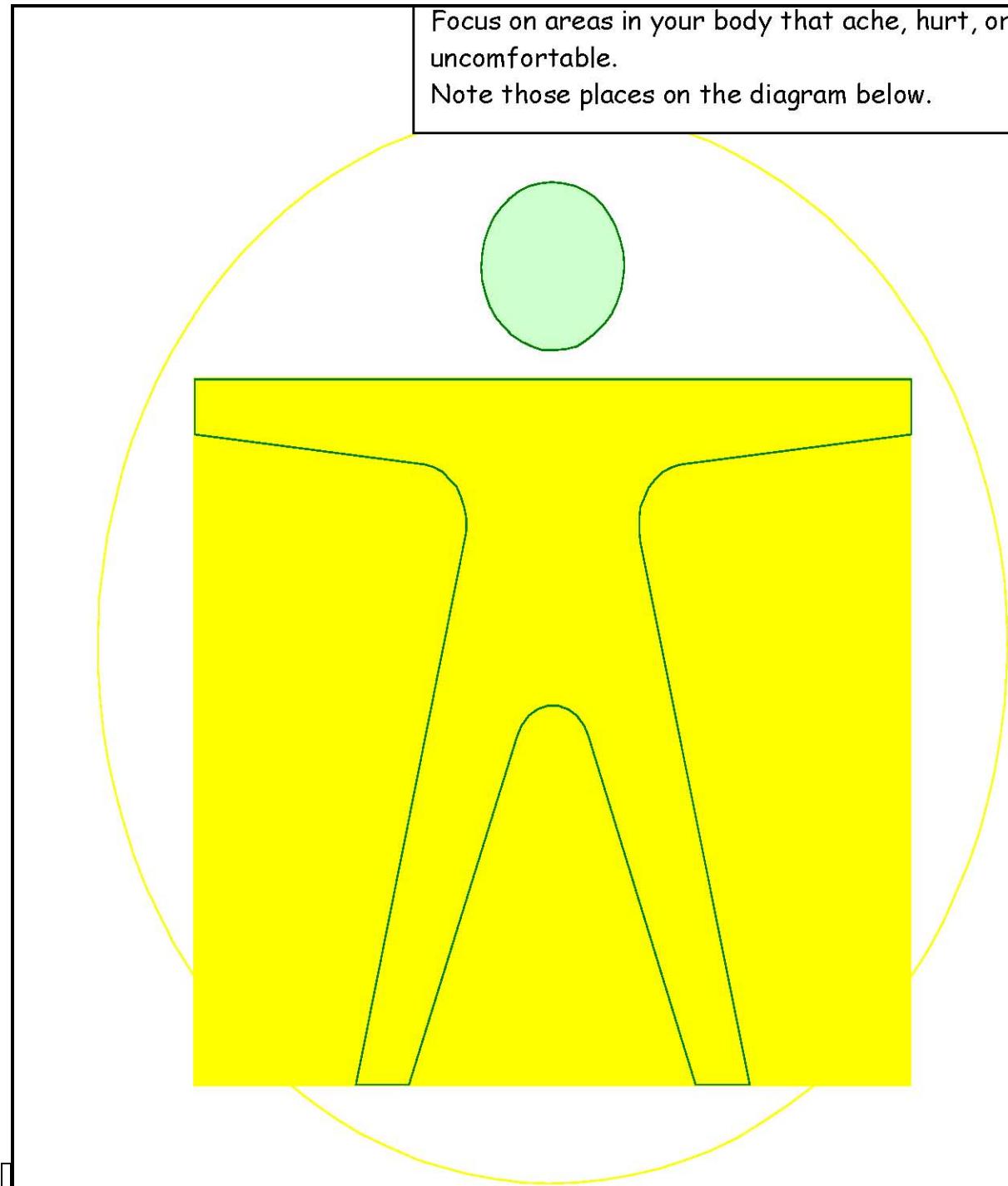
1. Individual perception of stressors. How we look at stressors determines their intensity, duration, and our responses.
2. Personal and family resources. Personal qualities like patience, perseverance, and optimism can affect the way one deals with stress.
3. Support network. Family, friends, counsellors and others can help you not only release stress but also cope with it well.

TEN SIMPLE COPING STRATEGIES:

1. Recognize and increase your awareness of your reactions to the stress.
2. Learn to deepen and slow down your breath, relax your body and your mind. Practice 5 minutes every hour by simply deep breathing (breath in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and let go for 4 seconds).
3. Recognize your stressors and triggers.
4. Decide what you can and cannot control or change; accept what you cannot change, change what you can.
5. Practice mindfulness – keep your attention in the present moment, with full awareness and acceptance and without judgment.
6. Implement positive, rational self-talk.
7. Take time where you can reduce interruptions, reflect, stretch, and simply BE.
8. Talk with friends, family, counsellors/psychologists to help you let go of held-in thoughts and feelings, get perspective, and feel connected to others.
9. Food and sleep are essential for your survival. Don't let them slip out of your control. Don't skip meals nor sacrifice sleep.
10. Work related strategies:
 - Set realistic self-expectations. Know your strengths, limits, and boundaries
 - Examine job demands. Are they reasonable? Are they prioritised?
 - Clarify role and duties.
 - Schedule. Set goals, prioritise tasks, maintain a schedule, and take breaks!

Self-Awareness Exercise

Diagram 1: Body Scan Activity



Arousal Reduction Exercises

Muscle stretching

Sitting

- Raise legs tense muscles
- Press feet into floor
- Press arms into side of chair
- Push shoulders into chair

Standing

- Arms behind back and clasp hands together
- Stand on tip toe
- Press palms together in front of you
- Flex chest muscles
- Join hands behind your head and stretch backwards
- Crouch down slightly

Distracting Thoughts

- Look at an object close to you, e.g. a tree / a plate... guess how old it is, who made it, how it feels, smells, tastes
- Count forwards by 3's
- Recall a list e.g. a name of food/ girls or boys names alphabetically, Ann, Bronwyn, Cathryn, Deidre, Ethel,... Apple, Bread, Carrot,...
- Describe out loud the features of the room you are in (+ draw it as you say it)

Self-Safe Hypnosis

Look around your immediate environment

1. Name 5 things you can see
Name 5 things you can hear
Name 5 things you can feel
2. Name 4 things you can see
Name 4 things you can hear
Name 4 things you can feel
3. Name 3 things you can see, hear, feel
4. Name 2 things you can see, hear, feel
5. Name one thing you can, see, hear, feel

Breathing Exercises

Remember.... Practice makes perfect

Sighing and Yawning

Try to breathe through your nose. This should reduce the number of yawns and sighs. Breathing in through your mouth gives your body too much oxygen and creates high respiration.

Breathing Waltz

At the first signs of over breathing do this exercise. The '9 second cycle' involves taking one breath every nine seconds.

1. Breathe in and out slowly in a nine second cycle. Breathe in for 3 seconds hold your breath for 3 seconds and out for 3 seconds (like a waltz...1 2 3, 1 2 3...). This will produce a breathing rate of 6-7 breaths per minute. Say the word *relax* or *let it go* to yourself every time you breathe out. Try to breathe in a smooth and light manner.
2. At the end of each minute (after 6-7 breaths) hold your breath (don't take a gulp of air) for 10 seconds and then continue breathing in the 9 second cycle.
3. Continue breathing in this way until all the symptoms of over breathing have gone.

Buddha Belly Exercise

The chest region is not made for sustained and relaxed breathing. This type of breathing should come from the diaphragm.

1. Lie down flat on your back or sit up straight in a chair.
2. Place your hands flat upon your diaphragm area, just below your chest.
3. Move your hands so that your finger tips are just touching each other.
4. Make sure your hands are resting lightly on your diaphragm and your finger tips are only just touching.
5. Now start to take deep, slow breaths from your diaphragm. You know if you are breathing from your diaphragm because if you are, your fingertips will move slightly apart from one another as you breathe in.
6. Practice this until you are breathing slowly and deeply from your diaphragm with your fingertips moving gently away from one another and then back to touching each time you breathe in and out
7. Remember that this is the area you should be breathing from normally throughout the day

Visualization

This is useful for people who are good with visual imagery, to relax and also to help block unhelpful thoughts.

1. Sit or lie down somewhere and close your eyes
2. Imagine that you have a movie projection screen in front of your forehead and that on the screen is a big number 1
3. Now imagine that as you breathe in slowly through your nose, the number 1 is drawn closer and closer to your forehead until it is stuck to your forehead
4. Then release that breath – slowly, slowly – and imagine that as you breathe out, the number 1 slides from your forehead, down through your face and is blown out by your mouth
5. Now see the number 2 on your screen in front of you. Repeat the procedure, remembering to breathe deeply and slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth.
6. Repeat this procedure until you reach Number 20

Healing Light Exercise

1. Sit or lie down somewhere and close your eyes
2. Choose a color that you find most soothing and relaxing
3. Focus upon your breathing and begin to breathe slowly
4. Now imagine that there is a light above your head, and the light is your soothing and relaxing colour. Every time you breathe in some of this light washes over you
5. Imagine that everywhere the light touches you, it soothes and relaxes you. Every time you breathe in, more and more light washes over you. It washes over your head, eyes, soothing and relaxing you, ...it washes over your jaw and neck, soothing and relaxing you, (continue on right through your body).
6. Remember that the light comes from an endless source, and the more light that you breathe in the more light is available, breathe in more and more light, more and more.... more and more

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This relaxation aims to reduce tension in the muscles by...

Tensing each muscle group for a count of five (1,2,3,4,5).

"Feel the tension as much as possible during the count, feel the tightness, feel it taut."

N.B. Feel it as tension, not pain.

Then suddenly letting go.

"Let it go. Feeling it soft, warm and heavy."

1. Left foot, ankle, knee to thigh
2. Right foot, ankle, knee to thigh
3. Stomach and bottom.
4. Chest
5. Right hand, wrist to shoulder
6. Left hand, wrist to shoulder

7. Shoulders, lift up
8. Make an 'ugly face'

Emphasize and be aware of:-

- Sensations of heaviness in body
- Warmth in arms and legs
- Calmness and regularity of heart beat
- Easy and natural breathing
- Warmth in abdomen
- Coolness in head

Simple Relaxation

1. Sit up right in your chair.
2. Straight back.
3. Feet on the floor.
4. Shoulders down and back.

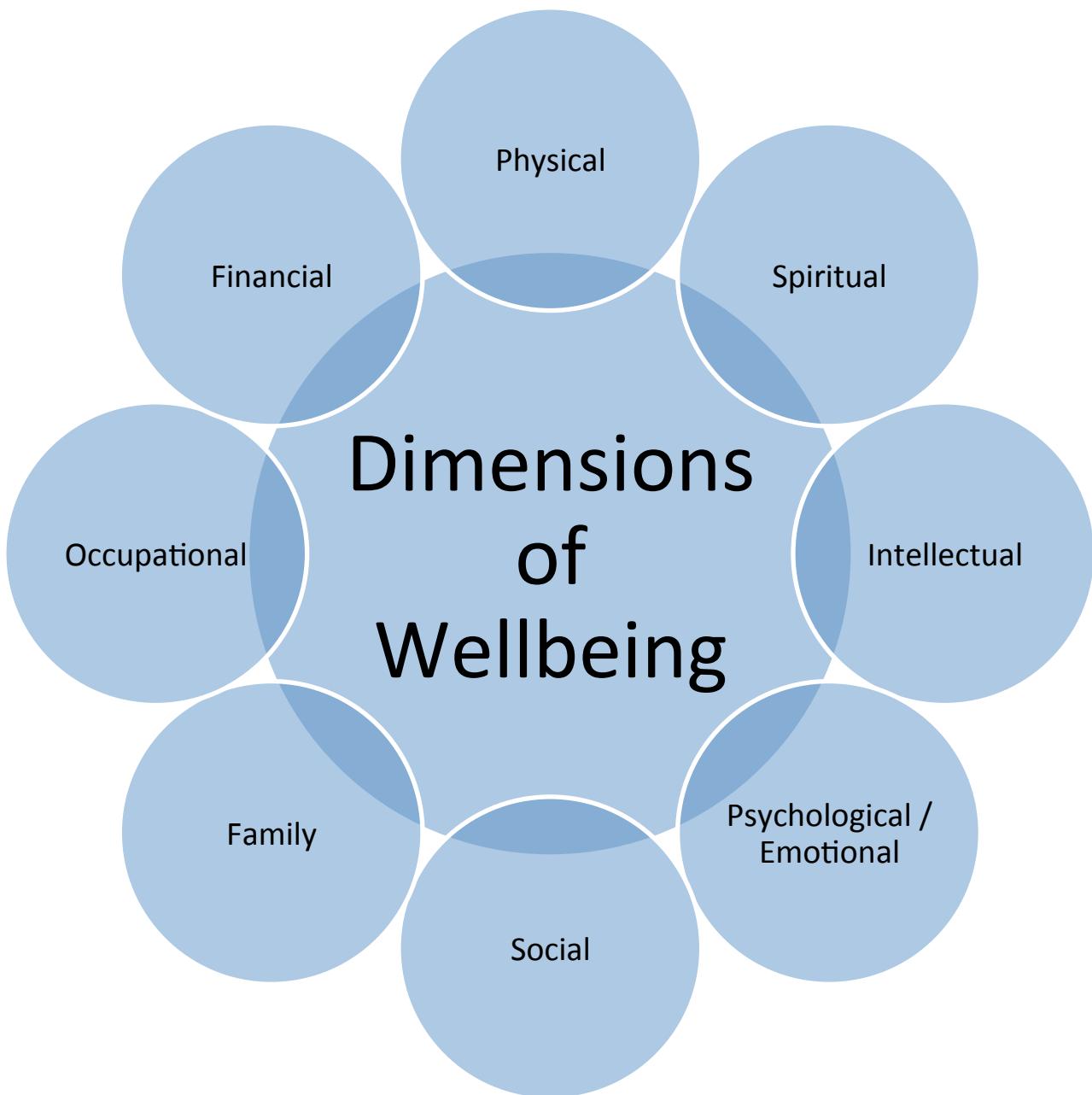
Breathe out...

Eight Dimensions of Wellbeing Model

Wellness embraces the eight dimensions of well-being into a quality way of living.

It is about striving to live life to the fullest and maximizing your personal potential. Wellness encompasses the conscious, self-directed effort of lifelong learning and decisions making that will lead to optimal health and a more successful and balanced existence.

The eight dimensions of wellness are all important and interrelated.



Physical (Body)

A healthy body maintained by good nutrition, regular exercise, avoiding harmful habits, making informed and responsible decisions about health, and seeking medical assistance when necessary.

To remain well, physical wellness requires that you take steps to protect your physical health by eating a well-balanced diet, getting plenty of physical activity and exercise, maintaining proper weight, getting enough sleep, trying to limit exposure to environmental contaminants, and restricting intake of harmful substances including alcohol, drugs, excessive sugar and caffeine.

Intellectual (Mind)

A state in which your mind is engaged in lively interaction with the world around you.

Intellectual wellness involves unbridled curiosity and lifelong learning. This dimension of wellness implies that you can apply the things you have learned, that you create opportunities to learn more, and that you engage your mind in lively interaction with the world around you.

Spiritual (Values, Purpose, Intuition, Vitality)

The sense that life is meaningful and has a purpose; the ethics, values and morals that guide us and give meaning and direction to life.

Spiritual wellness is a search for meaning and purpose in human existence leading one to strive for a state of harmony with oneself and others while working to balance inner needs with the rest of the world.

Social (Family, Friends, Relationships)

The ability to relate well to others, both within and outside the family unit.

Social wellness endows us with the ease and confidence to be outgoing, friendly, and affectionate toward others. Social wellness involves not only a concern for the individual, but also an interest in humanity and the environment as a whole.

Emotional (Feelings)

The ability to understand your own feelings, accept your limitations, achieve emotional stability, and become comfortable with your emotions.

Emotional wellness implies the ability to express emotions appropriately, adjust to change, cope with stress in a healthy way, and enjoy life despite its occasional disappointments and frustrations.

Financial (Resources)

Obtaining and maintaining the resources to positively influence one's life and ensure the other forms of wellness.

Financial wellness is a 'state' of wealth for individuals or families, irrespective of income levels. It includes your objective state of wealth, your behaviours as they relate to your state of wealth, your subjective perception of your future,

Occupational (Employment, volunteering)

The ability to contribute to others and find reward in your work that is both stimulating and challenging.

Occupational wellness is a reflection on how we occupy our time during the working week.

Although financial gain is a factor, we also need to consider the level of satisfaction we get from our job, the challenging nature of the work and a sense of belonging we have to colleagues as well as society.

Healthy Coping Strategies		
Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural
<p>Write things down</p> <p>Make small, daily decisions</p> <p>See the decisions you are already making</p> <p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Plan for the future</p> <p>Get the most information you can to help make decisions</p> <p>Anticipate needs</p> <p>Remember you have options</p> <p>Review previous successes</p> <p>Problem solve</p> <p>Have a Plan “B”</p> <p>Break large tasks into smaller ones</p> <p>Engage your intelligence in a new area, (e.g. go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theatre performance)</p> <p>Read literature that is unrelated to work</p> <p>Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes</p>	<p>Allow yourself to experience what you feel</p> <p>Label what you are experiencing</p> <p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Be assertive when necessary</p> <p>Keep communication open with others</p> <p>Remember you have options</p> <p>Use your sense of humour</p> <p>Spend time with others whose company you enjoy</p> <p>Stay in contact with important people in your life</p> <p>Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself</p> <p>Love yourself</p> <p>Reread favourite books, review favourite movies</p> <p>Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out</p> <p>Use “positive” words and language</p>	<p>Spend time by yourself</p> <p>Spend time with others</p> <p>Limit demands on time and energy</p> <p>Help others with tasks</p> <p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Do activities that you previously enjoyed</p> <p>Remember you have options</p> <p>Find new activities that are enjoyable and (mildly) challenging</p> <p>Set goals, have a plan</p> <p>Take time to chat with co-workers.</p> <p>Make quiet time to complete tasks</p> <p>Set limits with clients and colleagues</p> <p>Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting</p> <p>Get regular supervision or consultation</p> <p>Have a peer support group</p> <p>Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest</p>
Spiritual	Interpersonal	Physical
<p>Discuss changed beliefs with spiritual leader</p> <p>Meditation</p> <p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Practice rituals of your faith/beliefs</p> <p>Spiritual retreats/workshops</p> <p>Prayer</p> <p>Remember you have options</p> <p>Mindfulness</p> <p>Find spiritual support</p> <p>Read Spiritual literature</p> <p>Make time for reflection</p> <p>Spend time with nature</p> <p>Cherish your optimism and hope</p> <p>Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life</p> <p>Try at times not to be in charge or the expert</p> <p>Be open to not knowing</p>	<p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Take time to enjoy time with trust friend/partner</p> <p>Hugs</p> <p>Healthy boundaries</p> <p>Remember to use “I” statements</p> <p>Use humour to diffuse tense conversations</p> <p>Play together</p> <p>Talk with trusted partner/ friend</p> <p>Apologize when stress causes irritable behaviour or outbursts</p> <p>State needs and wants as clearly as possible</p>	<p>Aerobic exercise</p> <p>See doctor and dentist</p> <p>Routine sleep patterns</p> <p>Minimise caffeine, alcohol, and sugar</p> <p>Give yourself permission to ask for help</p> <p>Eat well-balanced, regular meals</p> <p>Drink water</p> <p>Wear comfortable clothes</p> <p>Engage in physical luxuries: spa, massage, bath, exercise trainer</p> <p>Remember to breathe – deeply</p> <p>Take mini-breaks</p> <p>Get medical care when needed</p> <p>Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun</p> <p>Make time away from telephones</p>

How to Decrease Your Vulnerability to Stress, Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

You have 20 minutes to answer the following questions. Use this page to write your answers:

What are some of the things you have done or techniques you have used to reduce your vulnerability to compassion fatigue or assist colleagues experiencing symptoms of compassion fatigue?

1. Self-awareness and Self-care

- *If you are dealing with a community tragedy, learn as much as possible about the event and deal with and articulate the powerful emotions and reactions related to the event.*
- *Know your own “triggers” and vulnerable areas, and learn to defuse them or avoid them.*
- *Resolve your own personal issues and continue to monitor your own reactions to others’ pain.*
- *Be human and allow yourself to grieve when bad things happen to others.*
- *Remember that “normal responses to abnormal situations” is true for practitioners and clients alike.*
- *Develop realistic expectations about the rewards as well as limitations of being a health worker, set boundaries for yourself.*
- *Become aware of, and alter any, irrational beliefs about the limitations of helping.*
- *Balance your work with other professional and personal activities that provide opportunities for growth and renewal:*
 - *Exercise, garden, walk, clean house*
 - *Read good novels*
 - *Watch television*
 - *Go to church*
 - *Cook for friends*
 - *Socialise with family or friends*
 - *Take vacations*
 - *Leave work at work*
 - *Shop*
 - *Do nothing*
 - *Meditate/pray*
 - *Get a massage*
 - *Turn music up loud*

2. Ask for and Accept Help from Others

- *Find opportunities to acknowledge and work through your experience in a supportive environment.*
- *Debrief yourself regularly and build healthy support groups.*
- *Seek assistance from co-workers and caregivers who have had similar experience in your field and have remained healthy and hopeful. Learn from their experience and take their advice.*
- *Delegate responsibilities and get help from others for routine work when appropriate.*
- *Develop a healthy support system to protect yourself from further fatigue and emotional exhaustion.*
- *Remember that most people do grow and learn from their experiences and so can helpers.*

3. Live a Healthy, Balanced Life

- Eat nutritious food, exercise, rest, and meditate or pray and take care of yourself as a whole being.
- Set and keep healthy boundaries for work. Ask yourself, “Would the world fall apart if I step away from my work for a day or a week?”
- Think about the idea that if you never say “no” what is your “yes” worth?
- Find activities that provide opportunities for growth and renewal.
- Take an honest look at your life before a crisis strikes. Find help to identify your obvious risks and work to correct or minimize them.
- Find ways to provide yourself with the emotional and spiritual strength for the future.
- Develop and reward a sense of humour. Expose yourself to humorous situations.
- Learn to laugh, enjoy life, and have healthy personal relationships.
- Learn to relax by breathing deeply.
- Avoid chaotic situations and learn simplicity.
- Take time to return to normal activities regularly.
- Avoid additional stressful situations.
- Review how you are spending time.
- Sleep well.

4. Spend Some Quiet Time Alone

- Learning mindfulness meditation is an excellent way to ground yourself in the moment and keep your thoughts from pulling you in different directions. The ability to reconnect with a spiritual source will also help you achieve inner balance and can produce an almost miraculous turnaround, even when your world seems its blackest.
- Put child to bed and take a bath.
- Get up early.
- Stay overnight somewhere other than your own home to be alone with yourself.

5. Recharge your Batteries Daily

- Something as simple as committing to eating better and stopping all other activities while eating can have an exponential benefit on both your psyche and your physical body. A regular exercise program can reduce stress, help you achieve outer balance, and re-energize you for time with family and friends.
- Hold one focused, connected, and meaningful conversation each day. This will jump-start even the most depleted batteries. Time with family and friends feeds the soul like nothing else and sadly seems to be the first thing to go when time is scarce.

6. Things to Avoid when Experiencing Compassion Fatigue

Avoid making big decisions.

- Compassion fatigued caregivers should not try to make any major life decisions until they've recovered physically, emotionally and spiritually. This is perhaps the most important advice we can give.
- Don't quit your job, get a divorce, or spend money on a lavish trip or a new sports car. It might feel great at the time, but a few days or weeks later, the same set of problems will resurface.

Avoid blaming others.

- *Similarly, blaming administration, staff, co-workers, or the “system” will not be productive. Being adversarial will only create further exhaustion and prevent deeper healing that needs to take place. The same recommendation goes for looking for another job. Wait until self-perceptions are more logical and less emotionally charged and until current stress is under control.*

Avoid expending energy complaining.

- *Also avoid commiserating with discontented co-workers. “Misery loves company.” It’s easy to fall into the habit of complaining when experiencing compassion fatigue, but it will only make things feel worse. There are other, more constructive environments to share and express feelings in a more therapeutic environment.*

Avoid trying a quick fix.

- *Compassion fatigue often makes one vulnerable to addictive behaviours and substance abuse. Many helping professionals try to deal with compassion fatigue by working longer and harder. Other self-medicate with alcohol and prescription drugs. There are a whole host of other addictive behaviours that are used to relieve personal pain. Don’t abuse work, alcohol, or drugs and don’t fall prey to a quick fix. Just as drugs can be addictive and eventually cause a whole different set of problems, the quick fix usually complicates an already overburdened life, escalating the downward spiral to burnout and depression.*

7. Reframe

- *Determine other approaches to the issue or concern or look at an action/event through the lens of others.*
 - *Think outside the box.*

Rule of Fives

Have five people you can call on to chat with about your problems. They can be professionals and/or personal supports. (E.g. Doctor, counsellor/psychologist, DID group, family member, friend, other health workers, colleague etc.)



Self-Assessment Tools

The rest of this toolkit focuses on the assessment of your self-care activities, triggers to stress, stress levels, resilience, basic needs, spirituality, and satisfaction with life. Please take the time to fill out each page and record your scores on page 32.

Personal Reflections – Your Current Level of Self-Care	
List three work related stressors	1. 2. 3.
List three personal stressors	1. 2. 3.
List three ways you know you are stressed (signs and symptoms)	1. 2. 3.
List three ways that your co-workers know you are stressed (signs and symptoms)	1. 2. 3.
List three ways that your loved ones/friends know you are stressed(signs and symptoms)	1. 2. 3.
List three methods at work by which you manage your stress	1. 2. 3.
List three methods during non-work hours by which you manage your stress	1. 2. 3.
List the first name of co-workers who are part of your work related support system	Co-Worker Name: Co-Worker Name:
List the first name of loved ones/friends who are part of your support system	Love One/Friend Name: Love One/Friend Name:

Measuring Life Stress¹

Instructions: Circle the number of any event which has occurred in your life over the past 12 months. Add up the numbers for your total score.

Event	Scale of Impact	Event	Scale of Impact
Death of spouse	100	Son or daughter leaving home	29
Divorce	73	Change in responsibility at work	29
Marital separation	65	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Jail term	63	Spouse begins/stops work	26
Death of close family member	63	Begin or end school	26
Personal injury or illness	53	Change in living conditions	25
Marriage	50	Revision of personal habits	24
Fired at work	47	Trouble with boss	23
Marital reconciliation	45	Change in work hours or conditions	20
Retirement	45	Change in residence	20
Change in health of family member	44	Change in schools	20
Pregnancy	39	Change in recreation	19
Sex difficulties	39	Change in church activity	19
Gain of new family member	39	Change in social activity	18
Business readjustment	39	Small mortgage or loan	17
Change in financial state	38	Change in sleep habits	16
Death of a close friend	37	Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change to a different line of work	36	Change in eating habits	15
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	Vacation	13
High mortgage	31	Christmas	12
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	31	Minor violations of the law	11
Trouble with in-laws	29	TOTAL SCORE	

¹

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was designed to reflect the cumulative stress to which an individual has been exposed over a period of time (Holmes & Holmes, 1970; Holmes and Rahe, 1967, Rahe and Arthur, 1978). "Life change units" are used to measure life stress in the areas noted above.

Interpretation

Score 150-199: If your current level of stress continues and/or you do not adopt effective stress management strategies, you have a 37% chance of a minor illness in the next two years.

Score 200-299: If your stress level continues and you do nothing to change your adaptive strategies, you have a 51% chance of developing a major illness in the next two years.

Score over 300: You have a 79% chance of a major health breakdown in the next two years. It is recommended that you begin adding effective coping strategies to your life style.

Note:

Major life stressors may impact decision making. When an individual is in danger of suffering the ill effects of life crises, it is best to limit as much as possible any additional disruption. As an example, if someone recently lost a loved one or lost a job, it may be best to wait until some time has passed before making a major decision like looking for another job or moving to another town.

Questions to Consider:

Does your score seem to accurately reflect the level of stress in your life as you see it? Why or why not?

What does your perception of life events have to do with the effects of stress on you?

Does your current level of self-care enhance your stress resiliency or leave you vulnerable?

How Vulnerable Are You To Stress?²

In modern society, most of us can't avoid stress. But we can learn to behave in ways that lessen its effects. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's vulnerability to stress - among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how we express our emotions. The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots. Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true of you. Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply to you - for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

	Always	Sometimes	Never		
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get 7-8 hours of sleep at least four nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 kms, on whom I can rely.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcohol drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am in good health (including eye-sight, hearing, and teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems - for example, chores and money.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or other caffeine-rich drinks) a day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.	1	2	3	4	5

²

University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, August 1985. Scale Developers: Lyle Miller and Alma Dell Smith of Boston University Medical Center.

<p>Scoring Instructions: To calculate your score, add up the figures and subtract 20.</p>	<p>Self-Care Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Notice that nearly all the items describe situations and behaviours over which you have a great deal of control. ◆ Review the items on which you scored three or higher. ◆ List those items in your self-care plan. ◆ Concentrate first on those that are easiest to change - for example, eating a hot, balanced meal daily and having fun at least once a week - before tackling those that seem difficult.
<p>Score Interpretation: A score below 10 indicates excellent resistance to stress. A score over 30 indicates some vulnerability to stress; A score over 50 indicates serious vulnerability to stress.</p>	

EGO RESILIENCY SCALE (J. Block & Kremen, 1996)

This scale consists of 14 items, each responded to on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 4 (*applies very strongly*). **Fourteen Questions record and add up your score.**

Let me know how true the following characteristics are as they apply to you generally:

1. I am generous with my friends.	1	2	3	4
2. I quickly get over and recover from being startled.	1	2	3	4
3. I enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations.	1	2	3	4
4. I usually succeed in making a favorable impression on people.	1	2	3	4
5. I enjoy trying new foods I have never tasted before.	1	2	3	4
6. I am regarded as a very energetic person.	1	2	3	4
7. I like to take different paths to familiar places.	1	2	3	4
8. I am more curious than most people.	1	2	3	4
9. Most of the people I meet are likable.	1	2	3	4
10. I usually think carefully about something before acting.	1	2	3	4
11. I like to do new and different things.	1	2	3	4
12. My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.	1	2	3	4
13. I would be willing to describe myself as a pretty "strong" personality.	1	2	3	4
14. I get over my anger at someone reasonably quickly.	1	2	3	4

Scoring Interpretation

Score	47-56	35-46	23-34	11-22	0-10
	Very High Resiliency Trait	High Resiliency Trait	Undetermined Trait	Low Resiliency Trait	Very Low Resiliency Trait

Building Personal Resilience³

The following list contains numerous characteristics that combine to form resilience. Check off all items which now describe you.

I have a good self-concept.
I have good self-esteem.
I am sensitive to the needs of others.
I am generally cooperative with others.
I am socially responsive.
I have a good sense of humor.
I am able to postpone getting my needs met (I can delay gratification).
I am generally flexible.
I can control my impulses when I need to do so.
I believe in the future and plan for it.
I have a good support system.
I recognize that I have many opportunities available to me.
I respect individual human beings.
I respect appropriate authority.
I am able to look for more than one solution to a problem.
I am able to plan ahead.
I have hobbies and interests beyond my traumas.
I have a positive view of life and see life's joys (as well as its sorrows).
I can problem solve and have a strategy which I use.
I have a sense of spirituality.
I celebrate myself regularly.
I celebrate others regularly.
I believe that I have some level of control over myself and others.
I would rather take action than wait for something to happen to me.
I am able to find meaning even in bad things.
I am someone others like and love.
I am able to find someone to help me when I need it.
I can ask questions in a creative way.
I have a conscience that allows me to see my own goodness.
I have a "knowing" about things that happen to and around me.
I can disengage and separate from others if they are not good for me.
I can attach to others and connect.

3

Williams and Pojula. (2002). The PTSD Workbook: Simple, Effective Techniques for Overcoming Traumatic Stress Symptoms.

SISRI-24

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory © 2008 D. King

Age? (in years) _____

Sex? (circle one) Male Female

The following statements are designed to measure various behaviours, thought processes, and mental characteristics. Read each statement carefully and choose which **one** of the five possible responses best reflects you by circling the corresponding number. If you are not sure, or if a statement does not seem to apply to you, choose the answer that seems the best. Please answer honestly and make responses based on how you actually are rather than how you would like to be. The five possible responses are:

0 – Not at all true of me | 1 – Not very true of me | 2 – Somewhat true of me | 3 – Very true of me | 4 – Completely true of me

For each item, circle the **one** response that most accurately describes **you**.

1. I have often questioned or pondered the nature of reality.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I recognize aspects of myself that are deeper than my physical body.	0	1	2	3	4
3. I have spent time contemplating the purpose or reason for my existence.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I am able to enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I am able to deeply contemplate what happens after death.	0	1	2	3	4
6. It is <i>difficult</i> for me to sense anything other than the physical and material.	0	1	2	3	4
7. My ability to find meaning and purpose in life helps me adapt to stressful situations.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I can control when I enter higher states of consciousness or awareness.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I have developed my own theories about such things as life, death, reality, and existence.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I am aware of a deeper connection between myself and other people.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I am able to define a purpose or reason for my life.	0	1	2	3	4
12. I am able to move freely between levels of consciousness or awareness.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I frequently contemplate the meaning of events in my life.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I define myself by my deeper, non-physical self.	0	1	2	3	4
15. When I experience a failure, I am still able to find meaning in it.	0	1	2	3	4
16. I often see issues and choices more clearly while in higher states of consciousness/awareness.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I have often contemplated the relationship between human beings and the rest of the universe.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I am highly aware of the nonmaterial aspects of life.	0	1	2	3	4
19. I am able to make decisions according to my purpose in life.	0	1	2	3	4
20. I recognize qualities in people which are more meaningful than their body, personality, or emotions.	0	1	2	3	4
21. I have deeply contemplated whether or not there is some greater power or force (e.g., god, goddess, divine being, higher energy, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4
22. Recognizing the nonmaterial aspects of life helps me feel centered.	0	1	2	3	4
23. I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.	0	1	2	3	4
24. I have developed my own techniques for entering higher states of consciousness or awareness.	0	1	2	3	4

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24)

Scoring Procedures

Total Spiritual Intelligence Score:

Sum all item responses or subscale scores (after accounting for *reverse-coded item).

24 items in total; Range: 0 – 96

4 Factors/Subscales:

I. Critical Existential Thinking (CET):

Sum items 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21.

7 items in total; range: 0 - 28

II. Personal Meaning Production (PMP):

Sum items 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23.

5 items in total; range: 0 - 20

III. Transcendental Awareness (TA):

Sum items 2, 6*, 10, 14, 18, 20, and 22.

7 items in total; range: 0 - 28

IV. Conscious State Expansion (CSE):

Sum items 4, 8, 12, 16, and 24.

5 items in total; range: 0 - 20

*Reverse Coding: Item # 6 (response must be reversed prior to summing scores).

Higher scores represent higher levels of spiritual intelligence and/or each capacity.

Permissions for Use

Use of the SISRI is unrestricted so long as it is for academic, educational, or research purposes. Unlimited duplication of this scale is allowed with full author acknowledgement only. Alterations and/or modifications of any kind are strictly prohibited without author permission. The author would appreciate a summary of findings from any research which utilizes the SISRI. Contact details are below.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.dbking.net/spiritualintelligence/>

or e-mail David King at dbking@live.ca

Checking Your Basic Needs ⁶			
Basic Self-Care Needs	Yes	No	Goal
Do I usually get enough sleep?			
Do I usually eat something fresh and unprocessed every day?			
Do I allow time in my week to touch nature, no matter how briefly?			
Do I get enough sunlight, especially in wintertime?			
Do I see my medical practitioner at least once a year?			
Do I see a dentist every six months?			
Do I get regular sexual thrills?			
Do I get enough fun exercise?			
Am I hugged and touched amply?			
Do I make time for friendship?			
Do I nurture my friendships?			
Do I have friends I can call when I am down, friends who really listen?			
Can I honestly ask for help when I need it?			
Do I regularly release negative emotions in a healthy manner?			
Do I forgive myself when I make a mistake?			
Do I do things that give me a sense of fulfilment, joy and purpose?			
Is there abundant beauty in my life?			
Do I allow myself to see beauty and to bring beauty into home and office?			
Do I make time for solitude?			
Am I getting daily or weekly spiritual nourishment?			
Can I remember the last time I laughed until I cried?			
Do I accept myself for who I am?			

⁶ Adapted from The Woman's Comfort Book (Louden, 1992)

Checking Your Basic Needs @ Work⁷

Adapted from Life Makeovers (2000) by Cheryl Richardson

Self-Care @ Work	Yes	No	Comments/Reflections
Do I take a lunch break every day and do something unrelated to work?			
Do I work reasonable hours?			
Do I schedule "breathing room" every day so I can step back, and reevaluate my priorities?			
Is my office free of clutter?			
Do I have adequate lighting and clean air?			
Do I delegate work to free my time and empower others?			
Do my family/friends honor my work time? If no, have I asked them?			
Do I have blocks of uninterrupted time without distractions and interruptions?			
Do I have a DO NOT DISTURB sign?			
Have I scheduled specific times for returning phone calls and checking e-mail?			
Have I stopped taking on more than I can handle?			
Do I drink enough water when I am at work?			
Do I have comfortable shoes/slippers at my office?			
Do I schedule time off from work (sick leave and/or vacation time) to take care of myself?			
Do I have someone to talk with about my professional life?			
Do I have creature comforts that make my office pleasant? (music and other sounds, aroma, artwork)			
Do I say yes to commitments that I later regret?			

⁷ Adapted from Life Makeovers (2000) by Cheryl Richardson

Satisfaction with Life

DIRECTIONS

- Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree.
- Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item.
- Please be open and honest in your responding.

SCALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- _____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
_____ 3. I am satisfied with life.
_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
_____ TOTAL (add items 1 through 5)

INTERPRETATION

35 – 32	26 – 31	21 – 25	20	15 – 19	10 – 14	5 - 9
Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Neutral	Slightly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied

Diener, E., Emmons, R.A., Larson, R.J., & Griffin, S. (1985) The satisfaction with life scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, 71-75.

Early Warning Signs³

I know I'm headed for trouble when:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

General Self-Care	Yes	No	Comments/Reflections
I am willing to ask for help.			
I know what to ask for.			
I reevaluate my priorities.			
I identify what is most important and deserving of my focus.			
I let go of that which detracts from my ability to focus.			

³

Adapted from Life Makeovers (2000) by Cheryl Richardson.

Self-Assessment – Personal Life Stress, Resilience and Coping				
Instructions: Record your score for each self-assessment in the section below, and circle the rating into which your score falls.				
Social Readjustment Rating Scale	Score: ____	<37% chance	51% chance	79% chance
How vulnerable are you to stress?	Score: ____	Excellent resistance	Some Vulnerability	Serious Vulnerability
Ego Resiliency Scale (ER-89)	Score: ____	High-Very High Resiliency Trait	Undetermined Trait	Low-Very Low Resiliency Trait
The Resiliency Scale	Score: ____	Very Resilient – Better than Most	Slow, but adequate	You're Struggling – Seek Help!
Spiritual Intelligence*				
Critical Existential Thinking (CET)	Score: ____	Satisfied with Score	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied with Score
Personal Meaning Production (PMP)	Score: ____	Satisfied with Score	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied with Score
Transcendental Awareness (TA)	Score: ____	Satisfied with Score	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied with Score
Conscious State Expansion (CSE)	Score: ____	Satisfied with Score	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied with Score
Basic Needs	# Items ____	Many	Some	Few
Satisfaction with Life	Score: ____	Satisfied – Extremely Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied – Very Dissatisfied

* The score categories listed here are for the purpose of self-assessment. These score categories are not part of the Spiritual Intelligence Scale. Whether or not you are satisfied with your score is your subjective decision.

Instructions

Look at your timeline activity and your score pattern.

If your scores fall mostly in the **green** column, you likely manage stressors well. High levels of life stress may be offset by healthy coping, high resilience, strong personal self-care practices, and overall satisfaction with one's life.

If your scores fall mostly in the **red** column, stressors may be taking their toll. High levels of stress which is not offset by resilience and coping indicate potential risk for health problems and negative impact on professional functioning. Under these circumstances, it is **critical** that you increase coping strategies and/or seek help from a professional to offset the negative impact.

If your scores fall in the middle category (e.g., **neutral**) you may be a bit more challenged in determining your score pattern. My recommendation is that you revise your score pattern by looking at the rating to which your score is closer. For the purposes of self-care planning, use the revised score pattern.

Setting Goals

Review Your Self-Assessment Results	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the Self-Assessments as indicated in the sections below.2. Identify the areas for which you are at risk.3. Below list ALL areas in which you want to make changes.4. After you have generated your list, rank the items, with 1 being the highest priority.5. Discuss your lists with the group.	
Life Stress, Resilience and Coping	

Setting Your Professional SMART Goals

Specific – **M**easurable – **A**ttainable – **R**ealistic – **T**ime-Based

GOALS List three professional goals here.	<p>Example: I will take a 15 minute walk around the building at break time each day for the next week.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
RESOURCES Identify the resources available to you for the implementation of your work-related goals.	Examples: Walking path around building; friend at work who likes to walk and will go with me.
SUPPORT Identify the person at work to whom you will turn for support in the implementation of your work-related goals.	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Relationship: _____</p> <p>Schedule the Date, Time and Manner of Your First Meeting:</p> <p>Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____</p>

Addressing resistances/obstacles to achieving self-care

IDENTIFY RESISTANCES/ OBSTACLES Are there resistances/ obstacles to the implementation of your plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, What are they? <input type="checkbox"/> Time <input type="checkbox"/> Money <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Fear <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify: _____
STRATEGIZE TO OVERCOME RESISTANCES/ OBSTACLES Will any of your identified resources help you overcome the resistances/ obstacles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, which ones? If no, how will you overcome your obstacles to self-care? Note: If resistances/obstacles cannot be overcome, then it may be appropriate to seek the assistance of a professional who specializes in compassion fatigue.

[1] The professional scores may identify problem areas, or the problem areas may be in personal life. Refer to the next page for personal self-assessment scores.

[2] The score categories listed here are for the purpose of self-assessment. These score categories are not part of the Spiritual Intelligence Scale. Whether or not you are satisfied with your score is your subjective decision.

Remember:
This is just the beginning.
Self-Care is an ongoing process.
Prioritise your self-care, and reassess your goals regularly.
CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

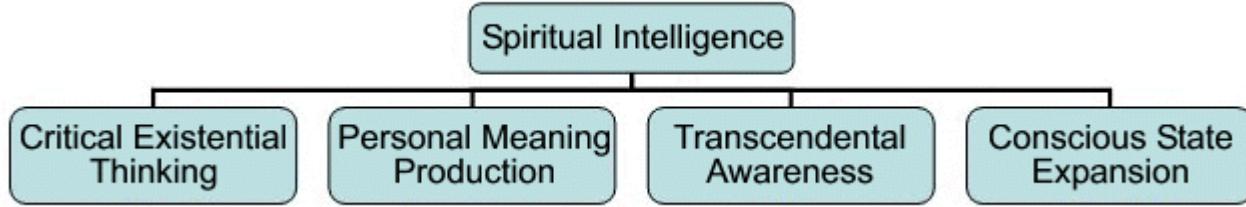
Making a commitment to attend to one's own self-care and growth takes courage. Supporting others in attending to their self-care and growth takes compassion. To institute a culture that honours and nourishes its Caregivers involves risk.

By taking this assessment and creating a self-care plan you have demonstrated courage, compassion and a willingness to take risk to change the status quo.

THANK YOU!

A Viable Model of Spiritual Intelligence

(King, 2008; King & DeCicco, 2009)



In the current model, **spiritual intelligence** is defined as a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states.

An extensive literature review suggests four main components of spiritual intelligence:

- I. **Critical Existential Thinking:** the capacity to critically contemplate meaning, purpose, and other existential/metaphysical issues (e.g., existence, reality, death, the universe); to come to original existential conclusions or philosophies; and to contemplate non-existential issues in relation to one's existence (i.e., from an existential perspective).
- II. **Personal Meaning Production:** the ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical & mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master (i.e., live according to) a life purpose.
- III. **Transcendental Awareness:** the capacity to identify transcendent dimensions/patterns of the self (i.e., a transpersonal or transcendent self), of others, and of the physical world (e.g., holism, nonmaterialism) during normal states of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one's self and to the physical world.
- IV. **Conscious State Expansion:** the ability to enter and exit higher/spiritual states of consciousness (e.g. pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness, unity, oneness) at one's own discretion (as in deep contemplation or reflection, meditation, prayer, etc.).

Spiritual intelligence performs quite well according to traditional criteria for intelligence. The above model satisfies the primary criterion: spiritual intelligence represents a set of mental abilities, as opposed to behaviours or experiences (click on each capacity for a detailed discussion).

How Can Breathing Balance the Stress Response System?

Patricia L. Gerbarg, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor in Psychiatry
New York Medical College

There are numerous ways in which breathing practices may balance the stress response system. One important part of the stress response system is the autonomic nervous system consisting of two branches. The sympathetic branch turns on quickly whenever we feel threatened. It increases the heart rate, respiratory rate, and metabolic rate preparing for fight or flight. When the threat has passed, the sympathetic system is supposed to quiet down while the parasympathetic system is activated to slow down the heart and respiratory rates, repair cellular damage, calm the mind, and replenish energy supplies. However, for many people, chronic stress keeps the sympathetic system in overdrive such that it is very hard to turn off. At the same time, the parasympathetic system tends to be under active. Consequently, the system stays out of balance leading to exhaustion of energy supplies, cumulative cellular damage, inflammation, anxiety, illness, and eventually depression.

Many medicines can temporarily dampen the sympathetic system, for example, anti-anxiety drugs, sedatives, tranquilizers, and some antidepressants. However, there are no medications available to boost the parasympathetic system. This is where mind-body practices can be helpful. Gentle stretching, certain breath practices, and meditation all can potentially strengthen the parasympathetic, soothing, recharging part of the nervous system. For most people, breath practices are the most rapidly effective method to balance the activity of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems.

The autonomic nervous system carries messages back and forth between the body and the brain so that the brain is constantly informed about the ever changing internal state of the body. The vagus nerves are the main parasympathetic pathways carrying information about pain, temperature, gut sensations, organ functions, air hunger, and respiratory functions. These body perceptions are called interoceptions.

All of the functions affected by the autonomic system occur automatically: heart beat, blood flow distribution, blood pressure, breathing, digestions, glandular functions, reactions of the immune system. There is only one that can be controlled either voluntarily or involuntarily: breathing. The lungs, airways, throat, chest wall, and diaphragm contain thousands of receptors (pressure, stretch, chemical) sending thousands of messages about your breathing through the vagus nerve. These messages travel through pathways leading to the emotion processing centers (limbic system, amygdale, hippocampus), hormone regulation centers (hypothalamus), and processing centers for perceptions and thoughts throughout the cortex (via the thalamus). Through these routes, breathing patterns exert a strong influence on how we think, feel, react, and perceive ourselves and others. By voluntarily changing the pattern of the breath, we can change the messages the body is sending to the brain and thereby change the way we think and feel. Skillful control of breath patterns can be used to calm the emotions, eliminate anxiety, stop obsessive worry, reduce stress over-reactivity, and induce greater mental clarity and focus.

The Five Levels of Resiliency

by Al Siebert, Ph.D., author of *The Resiliency Advantage*

Resilience is essential in today's world. In today's workplace everyone feels pressured to get more work done, of higher quality, with fewer people, in less time, with less budget. In our personal lives things are changing so rapidly everyone must learn how to be change proficient, cope with unexpected setbacks, and overcome unwanted adversities.

Resilience is the process of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences.

Resilient people overcome adversity, bounce back from setbacks, and can thrive under extreme, on-going pressure without acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways. The most resilient people recover from traumatic experiences stronger, better, and wiser.

Everyone is born with the potential to develop these abilities. **The five levels of resiliency are:**

1. Maintaining Your Emotional Stability, Health, and Well-Being
2. Focus Outward: Good Problem Solving Skills
3. Focus Inward: Strong Inner "Selves"
4. Well-Developed Resiliency Skills
5. The Talent for Serendipity

The **first** level is essential to sustaining your health and your energy.

The **second** level focuses outward on the challenges that must be handled, it is based on research findings that problem-focused coping leads to resiliency better than emotion-focused coping.

The **third** level focuses inward on the roots of resiliency--strong self-esteem, self-confidence, and a positive self-concept.

The **fourth** level covers the attributes and skills found in highly resilient people.

The **fifth** level describes what is possible at the highest level of resiliency. It is the talent for serendipity--the ability to convert misfortune into good fortune.

When faced with adversity it is useful to remember that:

- Your mind and habits will create either barriers or bridges to a better future.
- Resiliency can't be taught, but it can be learned. It comes from working to develop your unique combination of inborn abilities.
- The struggle to bounce back and recover from setbacks can lead to developing strengths and abilities that you didn't know were possible.

The Resiliency Center was founded by the late Al Siebert who studied highly resilient survivors for over fifty years. He authored the award-winning book *The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure and Bounce Back From Setbacks* (2006 Independent Publisher's Best Self-Help book), and best seller *The Survivor Personality: Why Some People Are Stronger, Smarter, and More Skillful at Handling Life's Difficulties...and How You Can Be, Too.*

The Resiliency Center is affiliated with several Certified Resiliency Trainers ("Resilitators"). Soon we plan to list and promote our qualified resiliency speakers and experts available for workshops, interviews and consultations. [Contact Us](#) for more information.

Prevalence and predictors of burnout in the COSA oncology workforce

By Professor Afaf Girgis & Ms Vibeke Hansen

Prepared for The Clinical Oncological Society of Australia & Cancer Australia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study overview

A total of 740 COSA members (56%) completed a 10-minute online or paper survey assessing the a) prevalence of burnout via both a global item and the Maslach Burnout Inventory, b) prevalence of psychosocial distress via the Kessler-10, c) demographic and occupational predictors of burnout, d) perceived causes of professional burnout, and e) recommended strategies for preventing or reducing its impact on cancer care personnel.

Key findings

- Self-reported levels of burnout were high, with oncologists and palliative care physicians experiencing the highest rates of burnout.
- Burnout as measured by the MBI showed slightly higher Exhaustion/Emotional Exhaustion rates in those with direct patient contact in their jobs, compared to those without patient contact; while those without patient contact exhibited considerably higher rates of Depersonalisation. Both sub-samples scored high on Personal Accomplishment/Professional Efficacy.
- The proportion of the COSA respondents with moderate to severe levels of psychiatric morbidity was comparable to the Australian general population.
- For those with patient contact, dissatisfaction with leave arrangements and a moderate to high perceived need for communication skills training were the most consistent predictors of burnout.
- High emotional exhaustion was more likely in those with 31 hours or more per week of direct patient contact.
- Depersonalisation was more likely in oncologists and palliative care physicians, respondents early in their career, and in those with low levels of patient contact.
- Low Personal Accomplishment was more likely in those with low levels of patient contact.
- For those whose jobs did not involve patient contact, high Cynicism was predicted by dissatisfaction with leave arrangements and a longer time working in the area of cancer care.
- In the overall sample, the odds of having moderate to severe levels of psychiatric morbidity were increased by being dissatisfied with one's leave arrangements and having high levels of self-defined burnout.
- Qualitative analyses revealed that a third of respondents who reported to have moderate to severe burnout perceived heavy workload to be a main cause of burnout.
- The most frequently mentioned strategy for preventing burnout was ensuring access to support when needed, such as counselling, debriefing, and peer support networks, followed by access to adequate leave, more adequate staffing, and better access to professional development.