

Compassion fatigue

When Caring Work Exceeds My Current Capacity

Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

After sustained helping work, you may notice reduced patience, emotional depletion, or difficulty remaining available. These experiences deserve attention without becoming a verdict on your compassion. Examine the conditions of the work and what support is needed to practice responsibly.

Use a recent work period and omit identifying client details. Separate personal needs from changes requiring supervision or organizational action.

Make the demand visible

Describe the type, volume, or intensity of caring work and the effect on your functioning. Include limited recovery time, conflicting responsibilities, or unavailable consultation.

Prepare a responsible request

Identify supervision, protected breaks, workload review, leave, consultation, or personal care as appropriate. Be specific about what can change and how essential client care will be maintained.

1. What caring-work demand is currently hardest to sustain?**2. What change in my attention, patience, or functioning have I noticed?****3. What support or workload adjustment is needed, and who can authorize it?****4. What concrete request and review point will I arrange?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Distinguish occupational strain from secondary traumatic stress, depression, and other conditions requiring assessment. Avoid relying on self-care while unsafe workloads persist. Address competence, continuity, and confidentiality through supervision and relevant organizational processes.