

Compassion Fatigue

Also called *Secondary Trauma Stress*




What Is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is **emotional and physical exhaustion** that develops when you are **consistently exposed to the trauma and suffering of others**.

It can be the result of →

 Hearing stories of trauma

 Witnessing the effects of trauma on people you serve

2 Key Areas in Addressing Compassion Fatigue

1 Know Yourself

We are **created in God's image** (Genesis 1:27). Learning more about how God created you helps you understand who God is.

- The same compassion that leads you to care for others is a reflection of **Christ's own love**—the love that carried Him to the cross.

God knows you intimately. You are a physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual being and each of those parts matters to God.

- **Psalm 139:1-6** - You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

HOW TO GET TO KNOW YOURSELF:

- When do you feel most purposeful and accomplished?
- What does fatigue look like in you?
 - How does it manifest itself in your body?
- What is something new you want to learn how to do?
- When do you feel most cared for?
 - What fills you up and brings you joy?
- When do you feel most safe and understood?

▶ NEXT STEPS:

Make a list of things you can do to care for yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Share it with someone who knows you and schedule time in your day/week/month to care for yourself in those ways.

2 Know Your Boundaries

Boundaries **define what is acceptable** and set **clear expectations**.

They are **not about controlling others** but about **how you respond** when limits are crossed.

Relational boundaries are **hard** to set because we **fear losing** those relationships.

▶ NEXT STEPS:

Consider frequent challenges you face and **what boundaries could help protect your well-being**.

- Are you saying “yes” to things you wish you had said “no” to?
- How much space do you need from stressful situations to process and recover afterward?
- Who in your life can help you stay accountable to your boundaries?
- Practice role-playing scripts to prepare for tough situations.



Remember:

Caring deeply is a reflection of Christ in you.

Protecting your health and setting boundaries allows you to **sustain that calling** and continue serving others well.

