



# Understanding Compassion Fatigue *and How to Create Compassion Satisfaction*

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Clinician)*

**Com-pas-sion** [kuhm-pash-uhn]

*noun* : a feeling of deep sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.



## **Compassion Fatigue:**

stress resulting from helping or wanting to help people who are experiencing trauma or suffering.

[GoodTherapy.org](http://GoodTherapy.org)



- The term ***compassion fatigue*** was first coined in 1992 when registered nurse Carla Joinson described a unique form of burnout that affected caregivers and resulted in a “loss of the ability to nurture.”<sup>10,11</sup> This form of burnout (1) was related to a variety of stressors, including long hours, heavy workload and the need to respond to complex patient needs such as pain, trauma and emotional distress; (2) resulted in nurses feeling tired, depressed, angry and detached; and (3) was associated with ineffective performance.<sup>11</sup>

# Trauma-Informed Care



## What is Trauma?

According to SAMHSA, individual trauma results from an:

- ★ **Event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is
- ★ **Experienced** by an individual as physically &/or emotionally harmful or threatening & that has lasting adverse
- ★ **Effects** of the individual's functioning &/or physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being



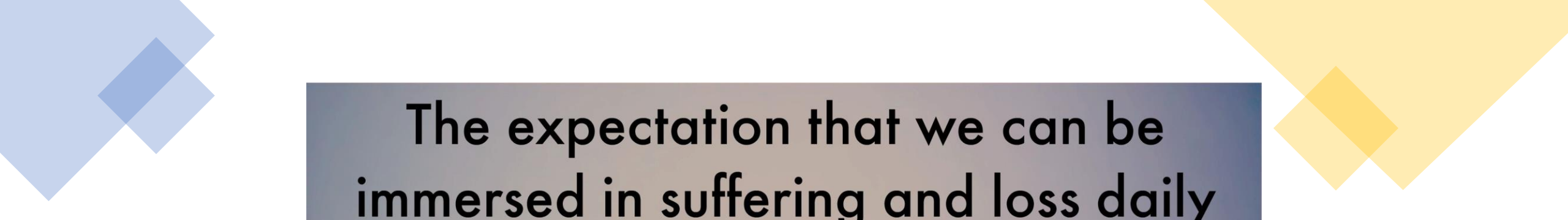
## A Trauma-Informed Approach Incorporates:

- ♦ **Realizing** the prevalence of trauma
- ♦ **Recognizing** how it affects all individuals involved with the program, organization or system, including its own workforce
- ♦ **Resisting** re-traumatization
- ♦ **Responding** by putting this knowledge into practice

## Core Principles of a Trauma-Informed System of Care:

- ♦ **Safety** - ensuring physical and emotional safety
- ♦ **Trustworthiness** - maintaining appropriate boundaries and making tasks clear
- ♦ **Choice** - prioritizing (staff) consumer choice and control (people want choices and options; for people who have had control taken away, having small choices makes a big difference)
- ♦ **Collaboration** - maximizing collaboration
- ♦ **Empowerment** - prioritizing (staff) consumer empowerment and skill-building





The expectation that we can be  
immersed in suffering and loss daily  
and not be touched by it  
is as unrealistic as expecting to  
be able to walk through water  
without getting wet.

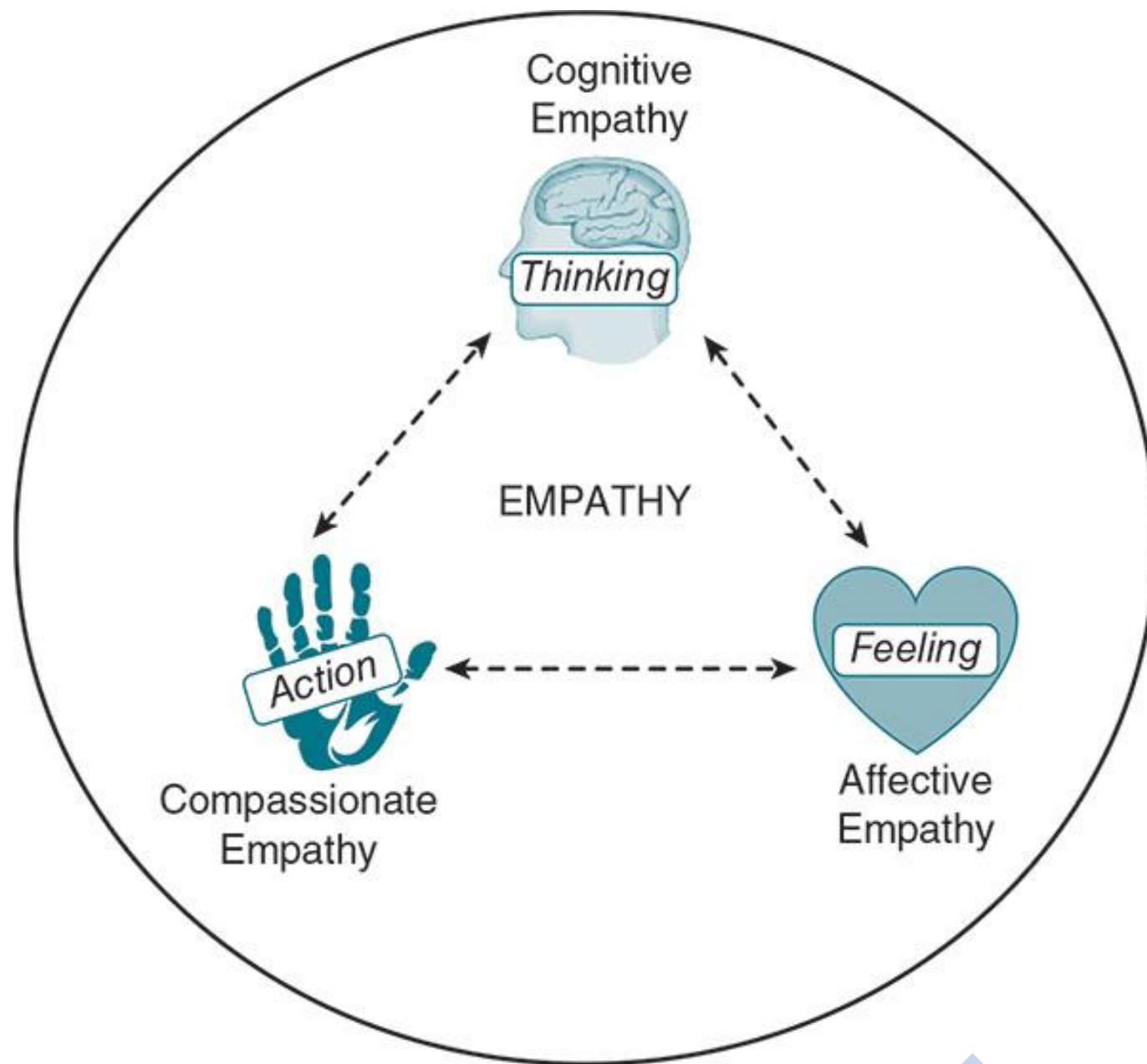
- Naomi Rachel Remen

A word cloud shaped like a heart, centered on the word **EMPATHY**. The word **EMPATHY** is in large teal letters. Other words in red include **HEAR**, **COMPASSIONATE**, **CONNECT**, **LISTENING**, **FEELINGS**, **EMOTIONAL**, **RESPONSIVE**, **COMMUNION**, **EMPATHIC**, **ALIVE**, **HEART**, **MUTUAL**, **AWARENESS**, **PRESENCE**, **I HEAR YOU MEETING**, **NEEDS**, **PRESENT WARMTH**, **SAFETY**, **CONSCIOUSNESS**, **HEARING**, **SPEAK**, **REQUEST**, **GIVING**, **DIALOGUE**, **INSIGHT**, **SOUL**, **RELATIONSHIP**, **AUTHENTICITY**, **EMOTION**, **UNDERSTAND**, **INTERPERSONAL**, **UNDERSTANDING**, **SELF-EMPATHY**, **COMMUNICATION**.

RSA  
**SHORT**







## There are 3 types of empathy:

- **Emotional empathy:** “You feel awful? Then I feel awful too!”
- **Cognitive empathy:** “I understand that you are feeling awful. That must suck.”
- **Compassion:** “You feel awful? I feel for you. How can I help?”



deepstash.com

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

**Definition:** emotional withdrawal, accompanied by mental and physical exhaustion after caring for sick or traumatized people over time OR apathy or indifference toward the suffering of others after over exposure to tragedy and pain.

## SIGNS

Blaming others for their own suffering  
Complaining about your life or your work  
Poor self-care  
Stress  
Muscle tension  
Escapism  
Struggling to concentrate  
Overeating  
Insomnia  
Bottling up your emotions

Blessing Manifesting

# Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

Examples of Compassion Fatigue – Figley (Ed.) 1995;97

## Cognitive

- Perfectionism
- Preoccupation with trauma
- Spacing out
- Loss of meaning
- Self-doubt
- Minimization

## Emotional

- Powerlessness
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Anger/rage
- Survivor guilt
- Hypersensitivity
- Emotional roller coaster
- Overwhelmed
- Depleted energy

## Behavioral

- Impatient
- Withdrawn
- Irritable
- Sleep disturbances
- Hypervigilance
- Accident prone
- Losing things

## Spiritual

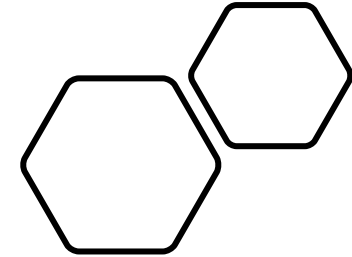
- Questioning the meaning of life
- Loss of purpose
- Lack of self-satisfaction
- Question religious beliefs

## Personal Relationships

- Withdrawal
- Mistrust
- Overprotective as a spouse or parent
- Loneliness

## Physical

- Shock
- Rapid heartbeat
- Joint and muscle pains
- Dizziness and disorientation
- Impaired immune system





Burnout



Secondary  
Trauma



Compassion  
Fatigue

## Secondary Traumatic Stress and Related Conditions: Sorting One from Another

**Secondary Traumatic Stress** refers to the presence of PTSD symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to traumatic material. Several other terms capture elements of this definition but are not all interchangeable with it.

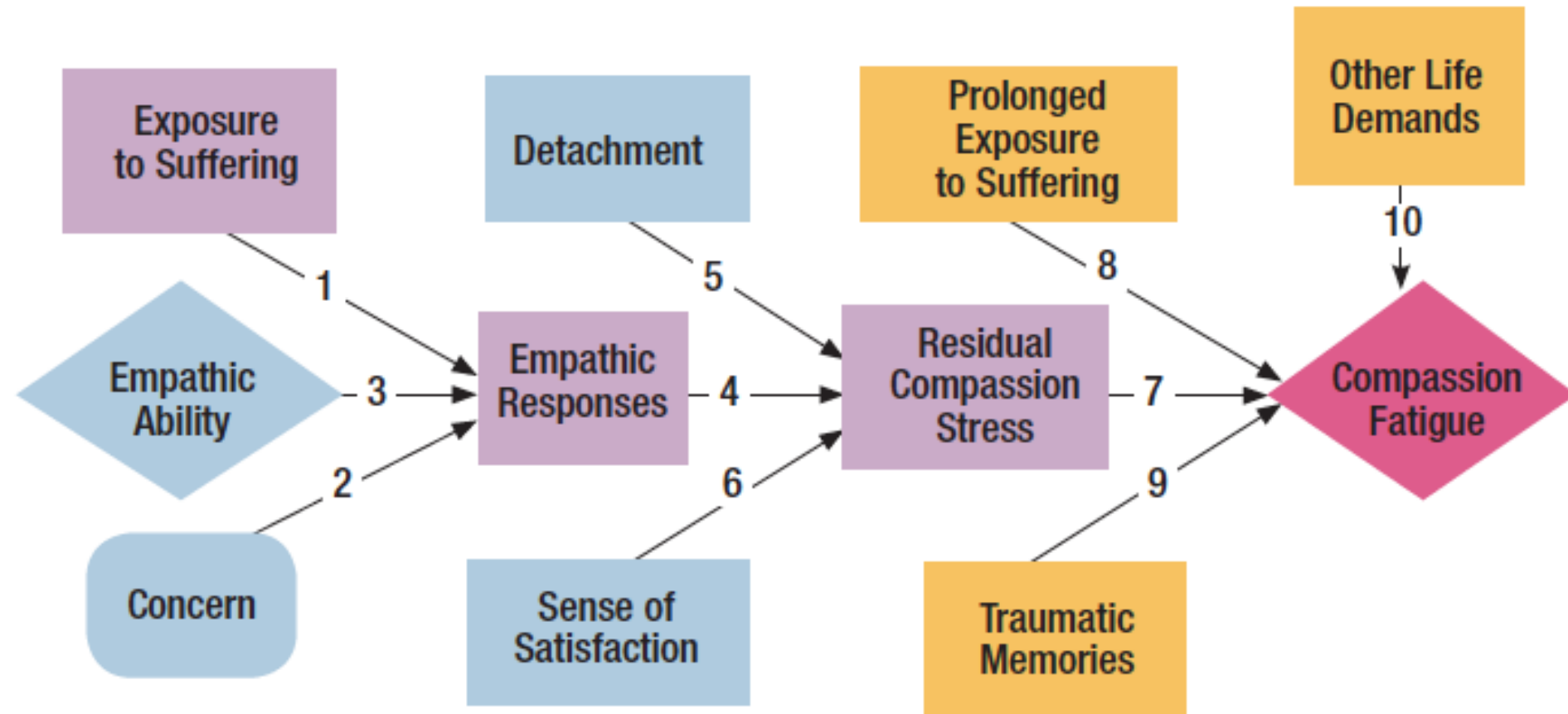
**Compassion fatigue**, a less stigmatizing way to describe secondary traumatic stress, has been used interchangeably with the term.

**Compassion satisfaction** refers to the positive feelings derived from competent performance as a trauma professional. It is characterized by positive relationships with colleagues, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society.

**Vicarious trauma** refers to changes in the inner experience of the therapist resulting from empathic engagement with a traumatized client. It is a theoretical term that focuses less on trauma symptoms and more on the covert cognitive changes that occur following cumulative exposure to another person's traumatic material.

**Burnout** is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. While it is also work-related, burnout develops as a result of general occupational stress; the term is not used to describe the effects of indirect trauma exposure specifically.

## Compassion Fatigue Process<sup>1</sup>

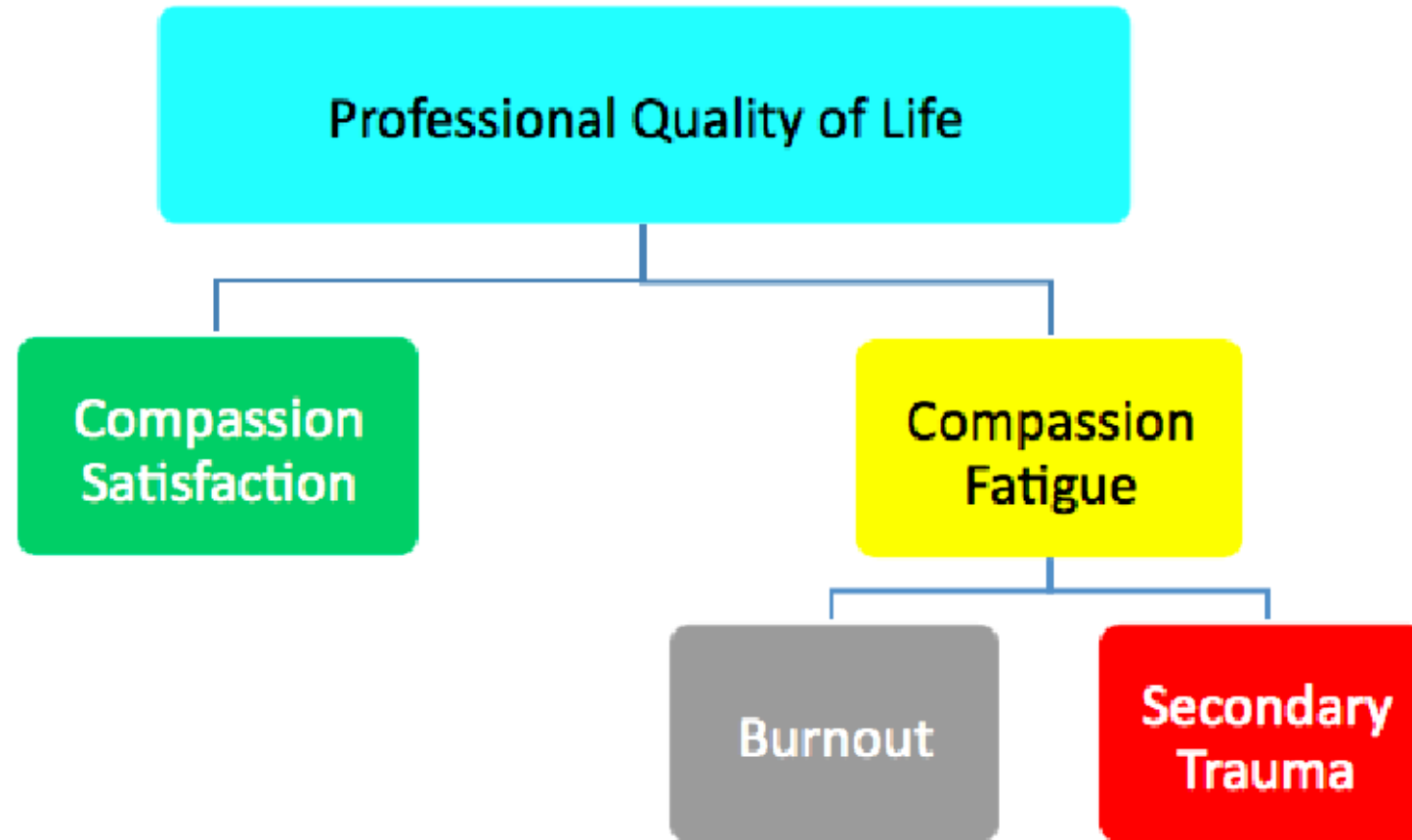


# Causes of Compassion Fatigue



- Placing needs of others before your own
- Unresolved past trauma and pain
- Lack of healthy life coping skills
- Lack of self awareness that limits growth
- Giving care to others under stress
- Lack of personal boundaries
- Inability to communicate needs





## 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.   |




WWW.BEVERLYKYER.COM

*Do not sacrifice yourself to help others.  
Increase yourself to help others. Your  
service and caregiving is a gift that  
should be nurtured and preserved.  
Be intentional and diligent about your  
own self-care.*

-BEVERLY KYER

*I am here to help you as you help others*

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic cup sitting on a matching saucer. A silver spoon is placed on the saucer to the left of the cup. The cup is empty, with only a small amount of liquid residue at the bottom. The background is dark and out of focus.

You can't pour from an empty cup.  
Take care of yourself first.



# resilience:

“an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

# 8 RESILIENCE PRACTICES

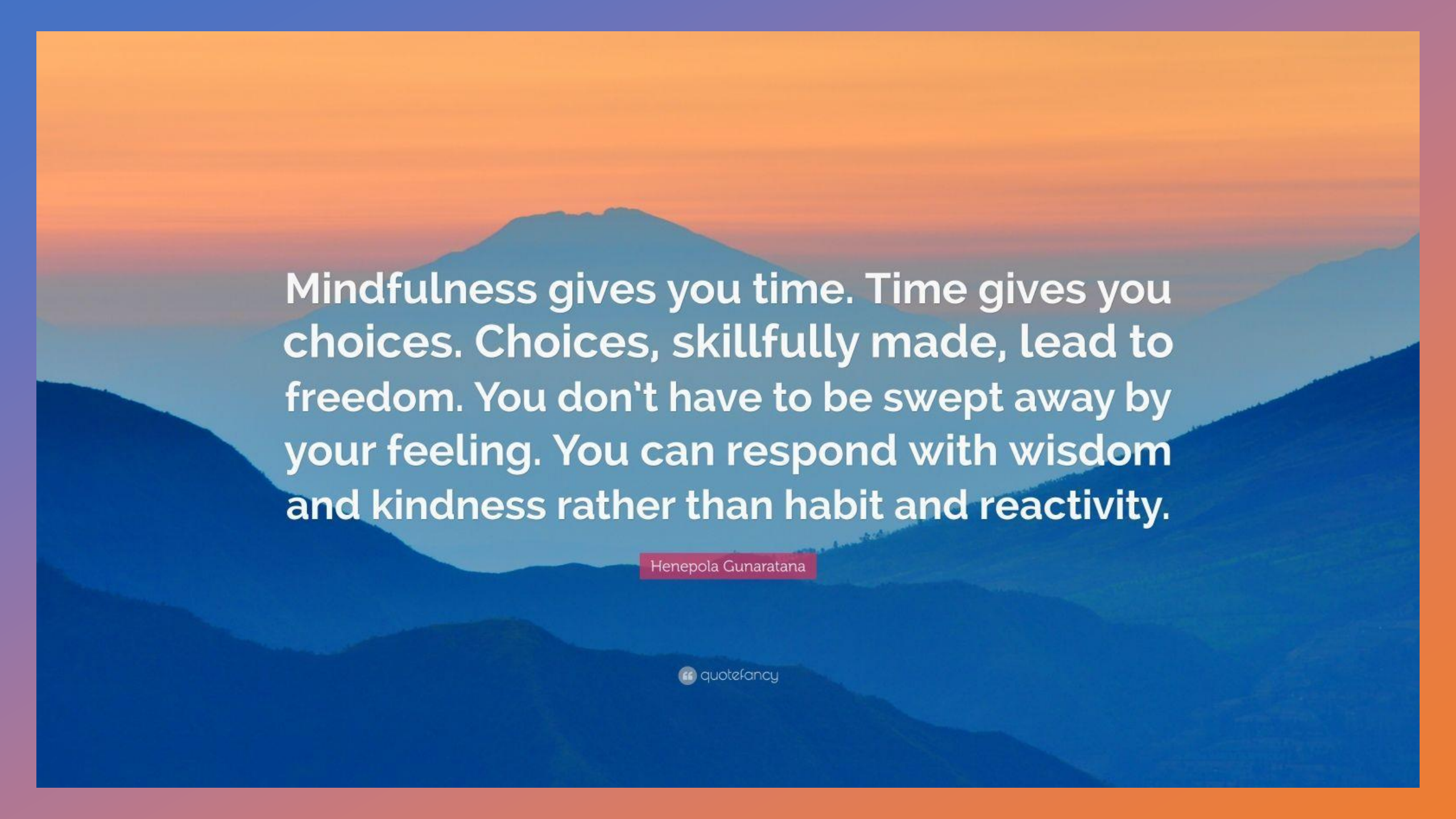


Center for Creative Leadership

**mindfulness:**  
awareness that  
arises from  
paying attention,  
on purpose, in the  
present moment,  
non-judgmentally

Jon Kabat-Zinn





Mindfulness gives you time. Time gives you choices. Choices, skillfully made, lead to freedom. You don't have to be swept away by your feeling. You can respond with wisdom and kindness rather than habit and reactivity.

Henepola Gunaratana





SLOW DOWN

**BREATH**

»» RE-FOCUS ««



“

Resilience can be  
strengthened by expressing  
gratitude for the good  
things in our lives.

OPTION B

# Weekly Gratitude Journal

Sunday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thursday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Monday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Friday \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Resilience Factors





# \_\_\_\_\_'s Self-Care Plan!

**MIND**

**BODY**

**SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE**

**I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**

**SPIRIT**



Self Care Plan by Social Work Tech | Ignacio Pacheco

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# My self care plan



I can exercise my body by...

I can be a good friend by ...

Important people  
Who I trust

I can relax my body and mind by...

This is me

I can keep myself clean and tidy by...

I can make  
myself happy by...

My hopes and dreams...

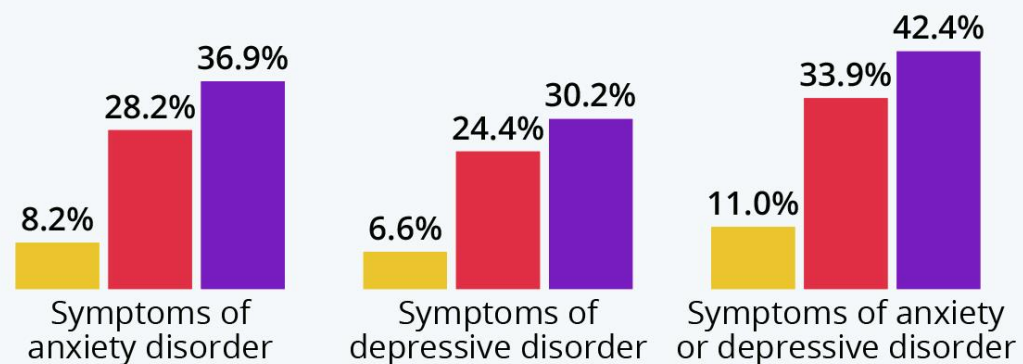
I can eat healthy  
foods...



# Pandemic Causes Spike in Anxiety & Depression

% of U.S. adults showing symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder\*

■ January-June 2019 ■ May 14-19, 2020 ■ December 9-21, 2020



\* Based on self-reported frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms. They are derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale.

Sources: CDC, NCHS, U.S. Census Bureau



statista







WWW.CARTOONADAY.COM



## What is Tech Fatigue-

- Mental fatigue or exhaustion that comes from frequent use of technology.
- Its also called “technostress”
- Which is characterized by the physical and emotional symptoms of stress resulting in use of technology and/or frequently looking at a computer screen or smart phone.



## Physical Symptoms may Include:

- Headaches
- Backaches
- Eye strain
- Neck pain
- Stiff shoulders
- Joint pain

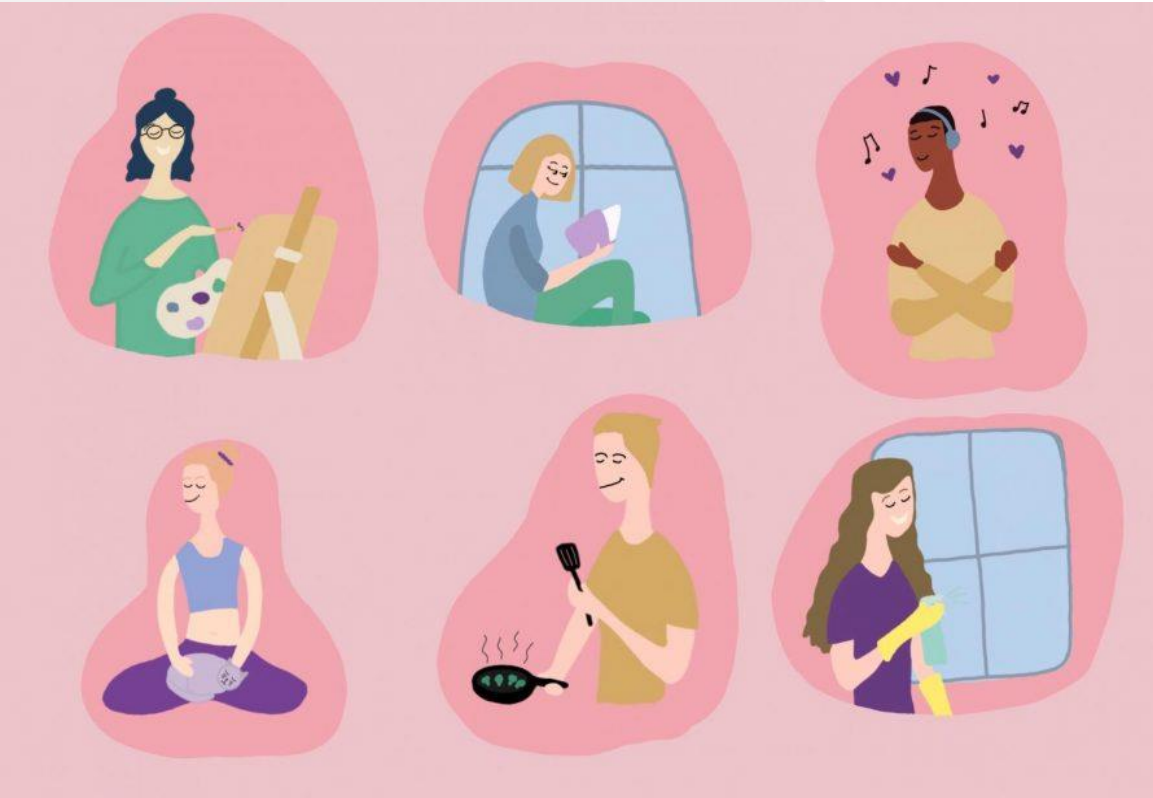


## Mental and Emotional symptom may Include:

- Mental fatigue or exhaustion
- Depression
- Nightmares
- Panic
- Resistance
- Feelings of helplessness
- Insomnia
- Loss of temper
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Errors in judgement



# What can we do about it?



- First recognize it
- Take regular breaks
- Shift awareness into your body (breathe into places of strain or tension)
- Give yourself limits on use of devices  
ex. Don't check email before 8:00am or after 6:00pm
- Take technology vacations- free days or weekends.
- Cultivate hobbies
- Find ways to connect personally with those in household,  
such as board games or card games or outside social distance visits, if comfortable.
- Mindfulness- meditation, walks or even eating.
- Exercise or movement regularly-especially outdoors



## **Zoom Fatigue – exhaustion and stress due to frequent video call or meetings.**

- Video chat requires more from us than face to face
- We need to work harder to process non-verbal cues
- And body language.
- Paying more attention to these things consumes a lot of energy
- “our minds are together and our bodies are not”,
- this causes people to have conflicting feelings, which is exhausting.
- More challenging to relax into conversation naturally.
- (Gianpiero Petriglieri)



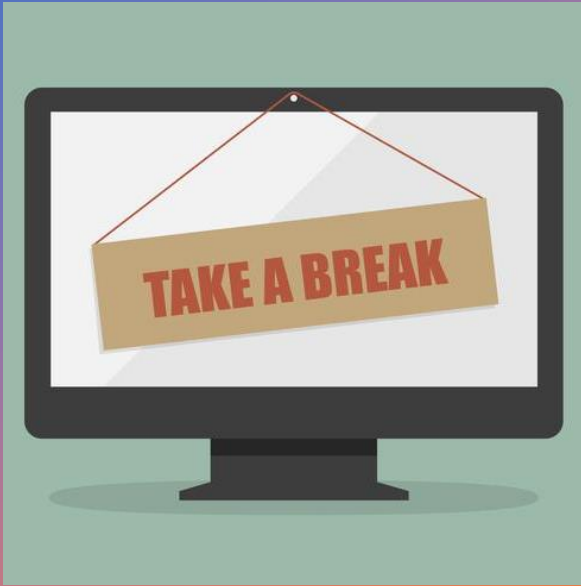
## Other contributing factors include:

- Silence or delays can cause anxiety

Studies show 1.2 second delays on conference calls or videos made people perceive the responder as less friendly or focused or disinterested.

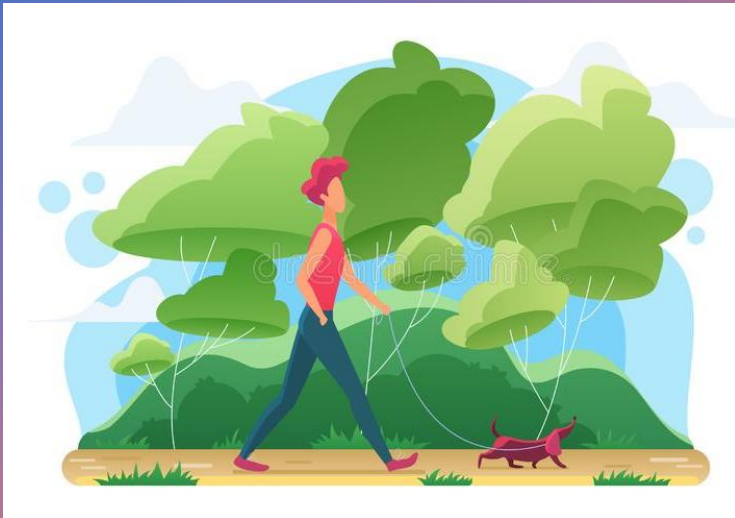
- Awareness of or being distracted by our physical presence on camera, feeling as of you're on stage, creating 'performance anxiety'
- Multitasking.
- More than one role being practiced in same venue, usually our social roles happen in different places, which is healthy(self complexity theory), now that's collapsed.
- Navigating outside distractions






## How can we alleviate it

- limiting video calls or meetings to those that are necessary
- Turning on video cameras should be optional
- Focus on the speaker, try to limit multitasking
- Have your screen to the side, instead of straight ahead, makes you feel like you're in an adjoining room, may be less tiring.
- Build in transition times between meetings if you can –can a drink of water, stretch, close your eyes for a few minutes, get a breath of fresh air.
- Create buffers and boundaries between 'work' times and 'personal' times.
- Practice good self care for prevention.
- Practice self compassion





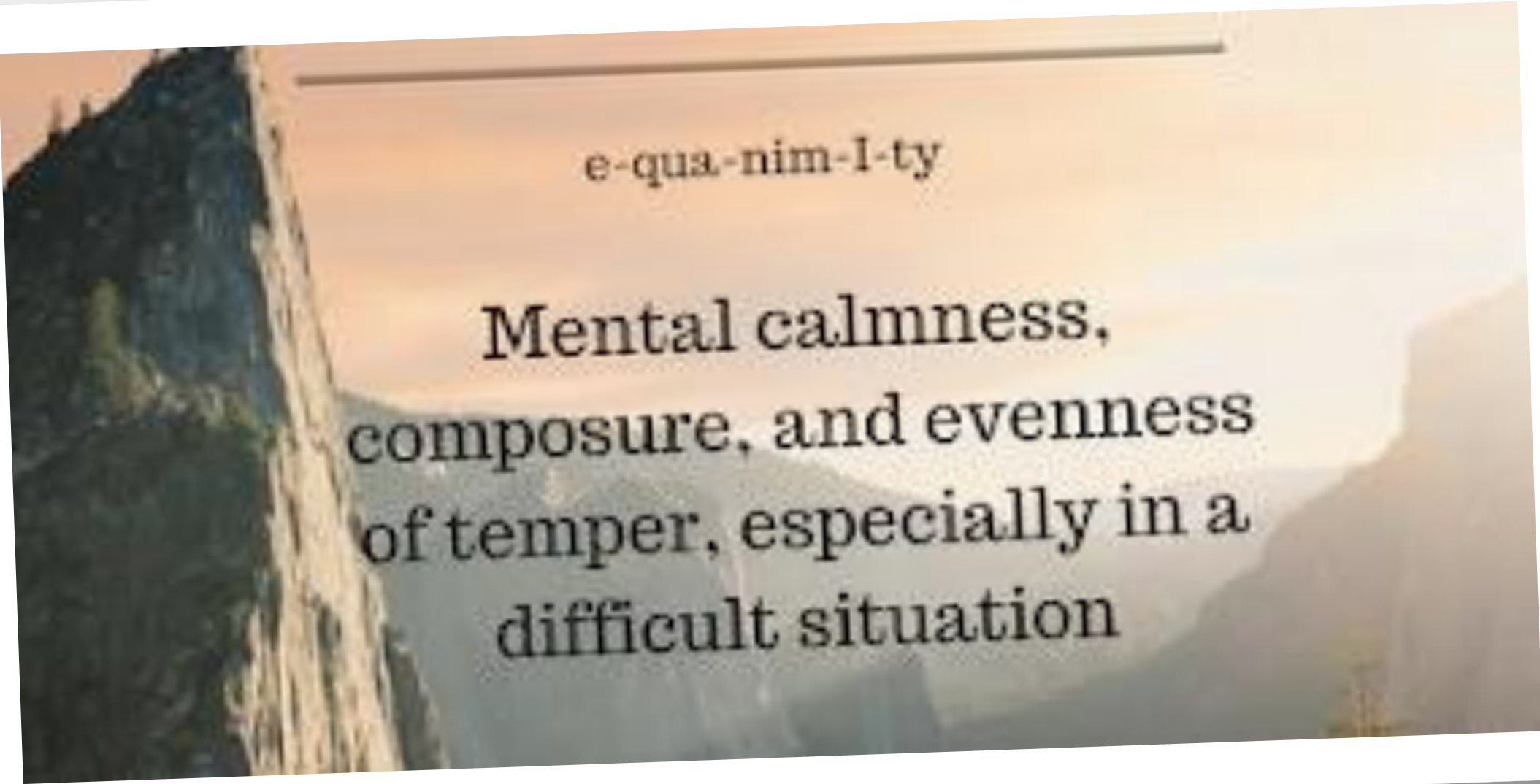
A scenic landscape featuring a two-lane asphalt road that curves through a valley. The road is flanked by dark, scrubby vegetation. In the distance, a range of mountains is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**Self-compassion is a way of emotionally recharging our batteries. Rather than becoming drained by helping others, self-compassion allows us to fill up our internal reserves, so that we have more to give to those who need us.**

Kristin Neff

“ quote fancy





---

e-qua-nim-i-ty

Mental calmness,  
composure, and evenness  
of temper, especially in a  
difficult situation



A person with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, is sitting cross-legged on a grassy hill. They are facing away from the camera, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is contemplative and hopeful.

# HAVE

# HOPE

THIS TOO SHALL PASS

## ***References and Resources:***

### **Books-**

- Overcoming Compassion Fatigue, a Practical resilience Workbook-Martha Teater, MA, LMFT, LPC, LCAS and John Ludgate, PhD; 2014
- Self-Compassion- Kristen Neff, PhD, 2011
- To Weep for a Stranger, Patricia Smith, 2009
- Burnout, The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle, Emily Nagoski, PhD and Amelia Nagoski, DMA
- The Body Keeps the Score, Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma, Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.

### **Websites-**

- <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>
- <https://homecareassistance.com/blog/5-mindfulness-exercises-relieve-caregiver-burnout>
- <https://www.compassionfatigue.org/>
- <https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/self-care-strategies-overall-stress-reduction-3144729>

**Other helpful resources-** (including self care-assessment tools)

[https://www.ucebt.com/images/pdfs-doc/SelfAssessmentToolSelfCare-PeerRole-Peer\\_Training.pdf](https://www.ucebt.com/images/pdfs-doc/SelfAssessmentToolSelfCare-PeerRole-Peer_Training.pdf)

<https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/health/services/promotion/sites/healthpromo/files/self%20care%20assessment%20and%20planning.pdf>

<https://positivepsychology.com/self-care-worksheets/>