Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (CSF) Test

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people's lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. This self -test helps you estimate your compassion status: How much at risk you are of burnout and compassion fatigue and also the degree of satisfaction with your helping others. Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your **current** situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last week. Then follow the scoring directions at the end of the self-test.

0=Never   1=Rarely   2=A Few Times   3=Somewhat Often
4=Often   5=Very Often

Items About You

1. I am happy.

2. I find my life satisfying.

3. I have beliefs that sustain me.

4.   I feel estranged from others.

5.   I find that I learn new things from those I care for.

6.   I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.

7.   I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.

8.   I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.

9.   I feel connected to others.

10. I feel calm.

11. I believe that I have a good balance between my work and my free time.

12. I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.

13. I have outburst of anger or irritability with little provocation

14. I am the person I always wanted to be.

15. I startle easily.

16. While working with a victim, I thought about violence against the perpetrator.

17. I am a sensitive person.

18. I have flashbacks connected to those I help.

19. I have good peer support when I need to work through a highly stressful experience.

20. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.

21. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.

22. I think that I need to "work through" a traumatic experience in my life.

23. I think that I need more close friends.

24. I think that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.

25. I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.

26. Working with those I help brings me a great deal of satisfaction.

27. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.

28. I am frightened of things a person I helped has said or done to me.

29. I experience troubling dreams similar to those I help.

30. I have happy thoughts about those I help and how I could help them.

31. I have experienced intrusive thoughts of times with especially difficult people I helped.

32. I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a person I helped.

33. I am pre-occupied with more than one person I help.

34. I am losing sleep over a person I help's traumatic experiences.

35. I have joyful feelings about how I can help the victims I work with.

36. I think that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of those I help.

37. I think that I might be positively "inoculated" by the traumatic stress of those I help.

38. I remind myself to be less concerned about the well being of those I help.

39. I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.

40. I have a sense of hopelessness associated with working with those I help.

41. I have felt "on edge" about various things and I attribute this to working with certain people I help.

42. I wish that I could avoid working with some people I help.

43. Some people I help are particularly enjoyable to work with.

44. I have been in danger working with people I help.

45. I feel that some people I help dislike me personally.

Items About Being a Helper and Your Helping Environment

46. I like my work as a helper.

47. I feel like I have the tools and resources that I need to do my work as a helper.

48. I have felt weak, tired, run down as a result of my work as helper.

49. I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.

50. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a helper.

51. I am unsuccessful at separating helping from personal life.

52. I enjoy my co-workers.

53. I depend on my co-workers to help me when I need it.

54. My co-workers can depend on me for help when they need it.

55. I trust my co-workers.

56. I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers

57. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping technology.

58. I feel I am working more for the money/prestige than for personal fulfillment.

59. Although I have to do paperwork that I don't like, I still have time to work with those I help.

60. I find it difficult separating my personal life from my helper life.

61. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.

62. I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my role as a helper.

63. I have thoughts that I am a "failure" as a helper.

64. I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.

65. I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work as a helper.

66. I plan to be a helper for a long time.

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Scoring Instructions
Please note that research is ongoing on this scale and the following scores should be used as a guide, not confirmatory information.
1.   Be certain you respond to all items.
2.   Mark the items for scoring:
a.   Put an x by the following 26 items: 1-3, 5, 9-11, 14, 19, 26-27, 30, 35, 37, 43, 46-47, 50, 52-55, 57, 59, 61, 66.
b.   Put a check by the following 16 items: 17, 23-25, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 56, 58, 60, 62-65.
c.   Circle the following 23 items: 4, 6-8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20-22, 28, 29, 31-34, 36, 38-40, 44.

3.   Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items and note:

a.   *Your potential for Compassion Satisfaction (x)*: 118 and above=extremely high potential; 100-117=high potential; 82-99=good potential; 64-81=modest potential; below 63=low potential.

b.   *Your risk for Burnout (check)*: 36 or less=extremely low risk; 37-50=moderate risk; 51-75=high risk; 76-85=extremely high risk.

c.   *Your risk for Compassion Fatigue (circle)*: 26 or less=extremely low risk, 27-30=low risk; 31-35=moderate risk; 36-40=high risk; 41 or more=extremely high risk.

Professional Resource Information

NOTE: URLs are given beside references rather than linked to the document name so that they can be read from print copy. While online, if you would like to link to a particular resource, click on the URL.

The Compassion Fatigue Scale has been established, presented, and published in several articles/chapters including, among others, the following:

Clemens, Lisa Ace. (1999). Secondary traumatic stress in rape crisis counselors: a descriptive study [thesis]. California State University, Fresno, M.S. thesis; Masters Abstracts 37/06: 1965.

Figley, C. R. (1998). Burnout as systemic traumatic stress: a model for helping traumatized family members. In C. R. Figley (ed.). Burnout in families: the systemic costs of caring, pp. 15-28. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press.

Figley, C.R. (1995). Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized. New York: Brunner Mazel. http://www.opengroup.com/open/dfbooks/087/0876307594.shtml.

Figley, C.R. (1999). Compassion Fatigue. In B. H. Stamm, (Ed.) Secondary traumatic stress: Self-care issues for clinicians, researchers and educators, 2nd Ed. Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press. http://www.sidran.org/digicart/products/stss.html.

Garrett, Carol. (1999). Stress, coping, empathy, secondary traumatic stress and burnout in healthcare providers working with HIV-infected individuals [dissertation]. New York University, Ph.D. dissertation; Dissertation Abstracts International 60/04-A: 1329.

Good, D. A. (1996). Secondary traumatic stress in art therapists and related mental health professionals [dissertation]. University of New Mexico, Ph.D. dissertation; Dissertation Abstracts International 57/06-A: 2370.

Landry, L. P. (1999). Secondary traumatic stress disorder in the therapists from the Oklahoma City bombing [dissertation]. University of North Texas, 1999.

Ortlepp, K. Friedman, M. (2001). The relationship between Sense of Coherence and indicators of secondary traumatic stress in non-professional trauma counsellors. South African Journal of Psychology, (31) 2, 38-45 (2001).

Rudolph, J.M, Stamm, B.H., & Stamm, H.E. (November, 1997). Compassion Fatigue: A Concern for Mental Health Policy, Providers and Administration. Poster presented at the 13th Annual Conference of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Montreal, ON, CA. http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/ISTSS97cf.PDF.

Salston, M. G. (2000). Secondary traumatic stress: a study exploring empathy and the exposure to the traumatic material of survivors of community violence [dissertation]. The Florida State University, 2000.

Stamm, B. H. (in press). Measuring Compassion Satisfaction as Well as Fatigue: Developmental History of the Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction Test. In C.R. Figley (Ed.). Treating Compassion Fatigue. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.

Stamm, B.H. (April 1997). Mental Health Research in Telehealth. Invited address at From Research to Practice: A Conference on Rural Mental Health Research, National Institute of Mental Health. Oxford MS.

White, Geoffry D. (1998). Trauma treatment training for Bosnian and Croatian mental health workers. American Journal ofOrthopsychiatry 68 (1), pp. 58-62.

There is a psychometric review in:

Figley, C.R. & Stamm, B.H. (1996). Psychometric Review of Compassion Fatigue Self Test http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/pdf/figleystamm.pdf. In B.H. Stamm (Ed), Measurement of Stress, Trauma and Adaptation. Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press http://www.sidran.org/dicart/products/stss/html.

For general information on Secondary Traumatic Stress/Vicarious Traumatization/Compassion Fatigue:

Pearlman, L. et al. (2000). Traumatic Stress Institute & Center for Adult & Adolescent Psychotherapy, LLC Web Site http://www.tsicaap.com.

Pearlman, L, et al. (1999). Risking Connections. Sidran Press. http://www.riskingconnection.com/

Pearlman, L. Saakvitne, K. (1995). Trauma and the Therapist: Countertransference and Vicarious Traumatization in Psychotherapy with Incest Survivors. New York: WW Norton. http://web.wwnorton.com/catnos/tl070183.htm.

Figley, C.R. (1998). Traumatology E-Journal Web Site.
http://psy.uq.edu.au/PTSD/trauma/j1.html.

Stamm, B.H. (1999). Secondary Traumatic Stress: Self-Care Issues for Clinicians, Researchers and Educators, 2nd Ed. Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press.
http://www.sidran.org/digicart/products/stss.html.

Stamm, B.H. (1999). Creating virtual community: Telehealth and self-care updated. In B.H. Stamm. (Ed.), Secondary Traumatic Stress: Self-Care Issues for Clinicians, Researchers and Educators, 2nd Ed. Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press. http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/vircom.htm.

Stamm, B.H. (1997). Work-related Secondary Traumatic Stress. PTSD Research Quarterly,(8) 2, Spring. http://www.isu.edu/dms/ptsd/RQ_Spring_1997.html.

Stamm, B.H. (1997). Work-related Secondary Traumatic Stress (reprint). Anxiety Disorders Association of America Reporter Summer/Fall.

Stamm, B. H. (1998). Rural-Care: Crossroads of Health Care, Culture, Traumatic Stress & Technology Web Site http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/index.htm.

Stamm, B. H. (1998). Traumatic Stress Secondary Traumatic Stress Web Site.
http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/ts.

The psychometric information reported here is based on a pooled sample of 370 people. Multivariate analysis of variance did not provide evidence of differences based on country of origin, type of work, or sex when age was used as a control variable.

Age

Sex

Type of Work

Country of Origin

Mean 35.4

Males n=121 (33%)

Trauma Professional n=58 (16%)

USA Rural-Urban mix n=160 (43%)

Median 36

Females n=207 (56%)

Business volunteer n=130 (35%)

Canada-Urban n=30 (8%)

SD 12.16

Unknown n=42 (11%)

Red Cross n=30 (8%)

South Africa-Urban n=130 (35%)

Caregivers in training n=102 (27%)

Internet (unknown origin) n=50 (13%)

Scale

Alpha

Mean

Standard Deviation

Interpretation

Compassion Satisfaction

.87

92.10

16.04

higher is better satisfaction with ability to caregiver (e.g. pleasure to help, like colleagues, feel good about ability to help, make contribution, etc.)

Burnout

.90

24.18

10.78

higher is higher risk for   burnout (feel hopeless and unwilling to deal with work, onset gradual as a result of feeling one's efforts make no difference or very high workload)

Compassion Fatigue

.87

28.78

13.15

higher is higher risk for Compassion Fatigue (symptoms of work-related PTSD, onset rapid as a result of exposure to highly stressful caregiving)

Additional Information: Lay Mental Health Caregivers in Rural Africa (n=16) (note, compassion satisfaction subscale was not given).
First assessment   (min 3 months work)   CF Mean 45 (SD 14.4)   BO Mean 32   (SD 11.3)
Second assessment (3 months later)   CF Mean 44 (SD 13.6) BO Mean 28.86 (SD 9.6)

Here is the SPSS Scoring Code

COMPUTE Comsat=SUM(1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 19, 26, 27, 30, 35, 37, 43, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 61, 66)
COMPUTE Brnout=SUM(17, 23,24, 25, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 56, 58, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65)
COMPUTE ComFat=SUM(4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 44)