

# Compassion Fatigue



Parent & Caregiver



Circle Agenda

Circle Topic		CR Section 3: What is Compassion Fatigue?
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Send out <a href="#">pre-read</a> for Section 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare materials for Session 3	
Purpose of Circle	<b>Today you will:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the experience of compassion fatigue.</li> <li>2. How shame and blame impact compassion fatigue.</li> <li>3. How compassion and self-compassion can prevent or lessen compassion fatigue.</li> </ol>	
Time/Materials/Preparation	<b>Time:</b> 90 minutes  <b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Group agreements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Group values and family goals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Name tags</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pens/markers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Centerpiece</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talking piece</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flipchart paper with Compassion Resilience definition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A few copies of the <a href="#">Compassionate Action Steps</a> handout to spread around the center of the circle</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Handouts:</b> <a href="#">Compassion Fatigue Cycle</a>, <a href="#">Wellness Compass Self-Care Practices Assessment</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Arrange chairs in a circle without furniture in the middle. Hang compassion resilience _____ on the wall.</p>	

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<p><b>Opening and Check-in</b> (20 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Welcome back! I invite everyone to get into a comfortable position with your eyes closed or looking towards the ground. We are going to take a moment to pause. Take a few slow breaths. <i>(Pause)</i> Name in your mind what you want to let go of to be present in this circle and your personal reason for being here. <i>(Pause for 10 seconds)</i> I invite you to bring your attention back to the circle.</li></ul> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Talking piece) <u>Share your name and on a scale of 1-5, 1 being horrible and 5 being great, how you are doing today.</u></li></ul> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ As a reminder, we have our group agreements in the center of our circle to guide our time together as a group <i>(point out their location, either in the middle of the circle or on a wall nearby).</i></li><li>▪ Last session we discussed what compassion looks like in action, how that applies to our lives and ways to regulate our and our children’s emotions. Today we are going to be looking at the cycle of compassion fatigue, how we have seen ourselves in the cycle and introduce a tool to help us monitor our wellbeing.</li></ul>
<p><b>Guiding Questions</b> (30 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ For the purposes of our time together, when we talk about <b>compassion fatigue</b>, we mean <i>the feelings of depression, sadness, exhaustion, anxiety and irritation that may be experienced by people who are helpers in their work and/or personal life.</i></li><li>▪ It is important to note that compassion fatigue is a normal response to the challenging and often overwhelming situations we face. There is a difference between compassion fatigue (develops over time) and triggered reactions (can happen without build up) — both can take us to “downstairs” brain responses we discussed in our last session.</li></ul> <p>Provide the <a href="#">Stages of Compassion Fatigue</a> handout and walk participants through the cycle (use the handout to assist you with your explanation — examples for each part of the cycle are listed below. Also, feel free to ask the group for examples of each stage as you explain them to the group instead of using example outlined below).</p>

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<p><b>Guiding Questions</b> (30 minutes) (continued)</p>     	<p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> Example for each stage of the cycle include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Zealot</b> – New parents promising to use only cloth diapers, make their own organic baby food and stay up on all the parenting research. Also setting the expectation that you are going to love every part of parenting.</li><li>▪ <b>Irritable</b> – You realize the expectations you set for yourself are not attainable. You become frustrated with others and frequently use sarcasm when responding to your children. You have a hard time giving your children your full attention.</li><li>▪ <b>Withdrawal</b> – You are drained of energy and avoid your children when possible (lets others watch children as often as possible, use electronics excessively to distract the children when at home). You have feelings of sadness and have a hard time connecting with others.</li><li>▪ <b>Zombie</b> – Feels you are the only one who can care for the family and their needs (laundry, cooking, cleaning) even though there are other capable family members available, you lose your temper with your family members often and never have fun.</li></ul> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Popcorn) <u>How have you experienced the impact of compassion fatigue — whether your fatigue or someone who cared for you in your life?</u></li><li>▪ (Popcorn) <u>What do you think the impact of shame and blame is on the cycle of fatigue?</u></li></ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> An example here is that shame and blame can perpetuate someone's movement through the cycle. They shame themselves for not being more engaged during the withdrawn phase, which pushes them into zombie cat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Popcorn) <u>How have you practiced self-compassion to help you avoid feelings of blame or shame?</u></li></ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> An example may be the use of positive self-talk to help someone realize their common humanity and normalize how challenging being a parent is.</p>

<p><b>Check for Understanding</b> (20 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Rather than focusing on avoiding or _____ compassion fatigue, we believe it is more powerful to _____ out how to feed and grow our compassion resilience. As a reminder, compassion resilience is (<i>point to poster hanging in the room</i>):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— “Compassion resilience is the power to return to a position of empathy, strength, and hope after the daily experience of the challenges our children face and those we face as their parents. It requires us to be able to optimism in an imperfect world.”</li></ul></li></ul>
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<p><b>Check for Understanding</b> (20 minutes) <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Popcorn) <u>What are some tips you would give to other parents and caregivers on how to build compassion resilience?</u></li></ul> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Building your compassion resilience is all about how you take care of yourself. We have a <a href="#">Wellness Compass Self-Care assessment</a> for you to take home with you. This assessment isn't meant to tell you how "good" or "bad" you are doing at self-care, but rather provide you with some additional ideas of ways to practice self-care.</li></ul> <p>Hand out <a href="#">Wellness Compass Self-Care Assessment</a>.</p>
<p><b>Self-care and Closing</b> (15 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Invite all in the circle to take a moment to pause, take a few slow breaths, name in your mind something you learned today and let go of any self judgment that may be a barrier to your continued _____ on that learning.</li><li>▪ Our self-care strategy today is the practice of gratitude. In the last 20 years science has shown that practicing gratitude daily offers _____ to our overall well-being. Gratitude has been shown to lead to positive mood, optimism and pro-social behavior — something that could help us get out of a stage of compassion fatigue.</li></ul> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Talking piece) <u>Please share one thing that you feel grateful for about this group and one thing you are grateful for outside of this group.</u></li></ul> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Thank you for being here today. We look forward to seeing you <i>(insert next meeting day/time here)</i>.</li></ul>