

Implementing a practice of self-care

As a financial support worker, you spend time working with people who experience many difficulties in their everyday lives. This can take a toll on your physical, mental, and emotional health. Compassion fatigue, which causes you to become desensitized to the needs of the people in your care, can also set in over time. The best way to deal with compassion fatigue is to take some time to address the stressors in your life and develop some strategies for self-care.

A self-care practice does not need to be elaborate or take up a lot of time. Below are some ideas to help you get started.

Reflect

Take some time to reflect on your mental and physical well-being every day.

- What are the largest demands to your time and energy?
- How is your stress level?
- What do you need to do to care for yourself right now?

Ask for help

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- Assess whether there are any tasks (both at work and at home) that you are able to delegate
- Join a peer support group
- Speak with friends or family at home about your needs and what they can do to help

Engage in self-care

Engage in self-care activities

- Some examples of physical wellness activities: exercising, eating healthy, sleeping well
- Some examples of emotional/mental wellness activities: being in nature, writing in a gratitude journal, surrounding yourself with people and things that bring you positivity

Set boundaries

Set boundaries and work within your scope of practice

- Have a transition ritual when you finish work to shift gears between work and personal time
- Set limits when asked to provide support or service on things that are beyond your scope of knowledge or ability
- Look to make appropriate referrals when needed

Combat fatigue

Combat online meeting fatigue

- Set limits to the number of online meetings and have shorter meetings where possible
- Schedule breaks in between meetings and use this time to stretch and move
- Consider connecting over the phone for smaller meetings, or use a picture or avatar during larger or longer meetings to take a break from being on camera

Self-care plan

Self-care is important for your well-being and is an important part of ensuring that you continue to provide the best support for your clients. Reflect on these questions and begin creating a self-care plan.

Anchor points

What are my top reasons for being in a helping role?
How do I see my values and ethics reflected in the work that I do?

Goals and motivations

What are my overall goals for my well-being?
How will taking care of myself benefit me, my work, and those around me?

Warning signs

When do I know that I need to start caring for myself?
What are the signs that I am at risk of burnout or impacted by compassion fatigue?

Stressors

What causes me the most stress?
What factors can I control?

Coping strategies

What can I do to contain or mitigate my stressors?
How can I strengthen my boundaries?

Support system

Who can check in with me and offer me support?
Who can I transfer responsibility to when things become too difficult?

Resources

Do I have access to external resources (e.g. health benefits, counselling)?
How can I ask about and access any additional supports available to me (e.g. cultural or religious considerations, Indigenous supports)?

Make a commitment to self-care

Write down two self-care activities that you will implement this week.
