

Module 23 – Stress Management for Home Care Aides

Handout #1 – Symptoms of Burnout

- Feelings of depression
- Sense of ongoing and constant fatigue
- Decreased interest in work
- Decreased productivity at work
- Withdrawal or isolation from others
- Change in eating patterns
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Feelings of helplessness and guilt
- Increased use of stimulants and alcohol
- Increased fear of death
- Excessive blaming
- Negative thinking
- Feelings of impatience and irritability
- Compulsive behaviors (overspending, overeating, gambling, etc.)
- Poor self-care
- Legal problems
- Chronic physical ailments, such as stomach issues and colds
- No longer finds activities enjoyable
- Difficulty concentrating or preoccupied
- Mentally and physically fatigued

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Handout #2 – Stress Reduction

- Eat a balanced diet and fuel your mind and body with nutritious foods.
- Get plenty of rest/sleep each night. Not once a week or on the weekends, but every night.
- Exercise regularly. Start a walking group at lunch time or walk for 30 minutes before you go home each night.
- Accept your own limits; do not try to do it all.
- Recognize when you need help and ask for assistance when you need it.
- Make a realistic schedule for yourself and your tasks.
- Make lists. Tasks seem less daunting when they are laid out in front of you. Also, as you cross items off your list, it gives you a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction.
- Relax. Breathe, meditate, sit quietly, etc., and consciously try to stop what you are doing and relax.
- Take a break. Take some time to yourself. This is OK; do not feel guilty about doing something for yourself. Your work will still be there when you return, so do not rush back to it if you are due for a break.
- Spend time with a pet. Animals can be therapeutic for stress and anxiety.
- Feed birds or fish.
- See your doctor for regular medical check-ups.
- Cut yourself some slack. Do not be harder on yourself than you would be to someone else.
- Love yourself. Tell yourself how proud you are of YOU every day. Give yourself credit for even the smallest accomplishments.
- Listen to yourself and identify your feelings, do not bury them, or ignore them.
- Get a massage, pedicure, manicure, etc. – something for YOU.
- Talk to people who can validate you and your feelings. Not everyone will understand your stress, therefore join a support group, or talk to co-workers.
- Give yourself permission to cry.
- Read a magazine or go to a movie.
- Do not work through your lunch or breaks.
- Laugh every day.
- Allow yourself to get professional help if your support system is not enough.
- Listen to music.
- Reduce your daily caffeine intake.
- Clean your car, office space, desk, etc. Less clutter in your environment may help clear clutter from your mind.
- Try not to blame others for your own anxieties, unhappiness, or poor health.
- Stay involved with hobbies or try a new hobby.
- Keep a journal.
- Plant flowers or vegetables.
- Turn off the news, and do not watch suspenseful or scary movies at night.
- Create a support team or group with co-workers, family, neighbors, etc.
- If possible, in your job, rotate responsibilities with others.
- Clarify personal boundaries and stick to them. It is ok to say no to someone, you need to take care of you first.
- Express your needs verbally. Others may not pick up on subtle or physical cues. Be direct, honest, and clear.

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Activity #1- PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and 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 home care aide. 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 nurse aide.
- 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 nurse aide.
- 11. Because of my care giving, I have felt on edge about various things.
- 12. I like my work as a nurse aide.
- 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 can keep up with care giving 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 nurse aide.
- 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I care for and how I could help them.
- 21. I feel overwhelmed because my workload 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 care for.
- 24. I am proud of what I can do to help.
- 25. As a result of my care giving, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- 26. I feel bogged down by the system.
- 27. I have thoughts that I am a success as a nurse aide.
- 28. I cannot recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- 29. I am a caring person.
- 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work

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YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test so you understand the interpretation for you. To find your score on **each section**, total the questions listed on the left and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

- 3. _____
- 6. _____
- 12. _____
- 16. _____
- 18. _____
- 20. _____
- 22. _____
- 24. _____
- 27. _____
- 30. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are "reverse scored." If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. "I am happy" tells us more about

- *1. _____ = _____
- *4. _____ = _____
- 8. _____
- 10. _____
- *15. _____ = _____
- *17. _____ = _____
- 19. _____
- 21. _____
- 26. _____
- *29. _____ = _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

You Wrote	Change to	
	5	the effects of helping when you are not
2	4	happy so
3	3	you reverse
4	2	the score
5	1	

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

- 2. _____
- 5. _____
- 7. _____
- 9. _____
- 11. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 23. _____
- 25. _____
- 28. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

TRANSFER YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE TO THE NEXT PAGE

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COMPASSION SATISFACTION SCORE _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason – for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

BURNOUT SCORE _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; you were having a difficult day or need some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS SCORE _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to others' trauma is rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, due to your work as a soldier or civilian working in military medicine personnel, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events because of your work, such as providing care to casualties or for those in a military medical rehabilitation facility, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with an event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

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