



Mental Health at Work

Compassion Fatigue

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May 28, 2026



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Land Acknowledgment



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Who We Are:

Our Vision: A Canada where mental health is a universal human right.

Founded in 1918, CMHA is a national charity that helps maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians.

Through our federated partners of over 100 local, provincial and national locations across Canada, CMHA provides a wide range of innovative services and supports. Anchored in evidence and informed by personal experience, we offer advocacy and resources to help prevent mental health and substance use problems and support recovery and resilience



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GOAL: To provide knowledge and skills to help you recognize and develop strategies around compassion fatigue



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Mental Health at Work: Compassion Fatigue



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Compassion Fatigue

“We feel the feelings of our clients.
We experience their fears; We
dream their dreams.

Eventually, we lose a certain spark
of optimism, humor and hope.

We tire. We aren't sick, but we
aren't ourselves.”

- Charles Figley-1995



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Compassion Fatigue



- The negative aspects of helping
- May be related to:
 - Providing support
 - The system
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
- Work-related trauma
- Burnout



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Empathy and Compassion



An important distinction to be made is the difference between empathy and compassion

- Empathy is about understanding and sharing others' feelings
- Compassion takes empathy further by actively trying to reduce suffering
- Fatigue doesn't come from a lack of empathy, but from a lack of support and resources for meaningful action



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What It Isn't

- Compassion fatigue is not a failing
- We are out of balance, and we need to realign ourselves



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What Are Some Risk Factors?



- Current life circumstances
- History
- Coping skills
- Personality
- Work environment
- Personal Attributes
- High empathy



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Preventing Compassion Fatigue: ABC's



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ABC's of Prevention

Awareness

- Recognizing the Signs

Balance

- Self-Care
- Positive Coping Strategies
- Emotional Boundaries

Connections

- De-brief
- Positive Support System



Preventing Compassion Fatigue: Awareness



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Awareness – Signs



- Chronic mental and physical exhaustion
- Reduced feelings of empathy
- Diminished enjoyment of career
- Poor work life balance
- Reduced concentration
- Impaired decision-making
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Loss of purpose
- Impaired immune system
- Feelings of irritability, anger or anxiety
- Depersonalization

Awareness – Thinking Traps

- 20,000 Moments
- Automatic
- Negative Bias
- Exaggerated
- Convincing
- Not accurate reflection of reality
- Overgeneralizing
- B&W thinking
- Labelling
- Fortune-Telling
- Mental Filter
- Emotional Reasoning
- “Should have”



What are your thinking traps?

- **Overgeneralizing** – using always, never
- **B&W thinking** – saying everything is good, or bad, right or wrong
- **Labelling** – saying only negative things about a situation
- **Fortune-Telling** – predicting doom and gloom
- **Mental Filter** – focusing only on the negative of a situation
- **Emotional Reasoning** – thinking that you feel bad so everything must be bad
- **“Should have”**
- **All of the above**

Get out of Thinking Traps

- Separate thoughts from events
- Identify the thinking traps
- Challenge the traps
 - Examine the evidence
 - Double-standard
 - Survey method
 - Conduct an experiment
- Aim for balance



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Get Out of Thinking Traps

Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facts• Thoughts• Feeling and Reactions
Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any thinking traps?
Thinking trap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name them
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-examine the evidence• How would you judge others?• Test your beliefs
Balanced thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would be a more balanced thought?



Challenge Your Thoughts

Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I feel sad and overwhelmed. I'm having a hard time figuring out what to do.
Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm the worst! I should be able to handle this!
Thinking trap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labelling• "Should" statements
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the evidence: I have a lot of challenges right now. I'm worried about my family, and everything seems to change so quickly. I've successfully handled complicated situations in the past, so I know I can do this.
Balanced thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's okay to feel upset right now—there's a lot going on. I'm going to think about how I got through past situations and see what worked for me. I'm trying to do a lot on my own, so I'm going to talk to my family so we can make a plan and work together.



Preventing Compassion Fatigue: Balance



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Balance

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Spiritual
To regularly renew and recharge	To feel valued and appreciated for our contributions	The opportunity to focus in an absorbed way on our most important tasks and define when and where we get our work done	To do more of what we do best and enjoy most

- Balance nourishing and depleting activities



Balance / Self Care



- Practice healthy nutrition
- Breathe
- Practice work-life balance
- Seek and give support (co-workers, family, community)
- Take a break
- Relax
- Walk
- Treat yourself
- Mental Fitness
- Mindfulness/ Meditation



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Self-care Looks Like...

Prioritizing
mental well-
being

Advocating
for mental
health for all

Volunteering
to make a
difference

Supporting
others with
kindness

Enhancing
psychological
safety at work

Giving back
to our
community



Balance / Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zinn defines it as:

“ Awareness and paying attention in the present moment non-judgmentally ”



Balance / You

- Honor your emotional needs
- Set emotional boundaries
- Re-energize with interests/hobbies
- Practice positive coping strategies
- Seek personal therapy



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Self Compassion



- No different than having compassion for others
- 3 elements:
 - Self-Kindness vs. Self- Judgement
 - Common Humanity vs. Isolation
 - Mindfulness vs. Over-Identification

Preventing Compassion Fatigue: Connections



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Connections

- Talk out your stress/ De-brief
- Cultivate healthy friendships
- Build a support system
- Pets



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Framework for Support



Connections



- De-briefing
 - Increased Self Awareness
 - Fair Warning
- Consent
- Limited Disclosure
- Peer Support
- Shared resiliency building

Mental Health at Work: Resources



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Referral Contacts and Resources

- Mental Health Support Line: **310-6789**
- National Suicide Helpline: **988**
- BC Suicide Prevention Line: **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**
- Police/Ambulance: **9-1-1**
- Mental Health Emergency Services
- Employee Assistance Program
- HealthLink BC: **8-1-1**

- Family doctor/walk-in clinic
- Family and friends

Web-based resources:

[CMHA-BC Division](#)

[CAMH Education - Mental Health 101](#)

[Mental Health Commission of Canada - Resources & Toolkits](#)



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Mental Health and Wellness Supports for Indigenous People

24-hour KUU-US Crisis Line:

- Toll free (1-800-588-8717)
- Adults/Elders (250-723-4050)
- Child/Youth (250-723-2040)
- Métis Line (1-833-MétisBC)

Indian Residential School Survivors Society:

- 1-800-721-0066 or 604-985-4464

Hope for Wellness Helpline:

- <http://www.hopeforwellness.ca> or 1-855-242-3310

First Nations Health Authority:

- www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use



Workplace Mental Health Resources



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

- www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

People Working Well

- www.peopleworkingwellbc.ca

Care 4 Caregivers

- www.careforcaregivers.ca

Guarding Minds @ Work

- www.guardingmindsatwork.ca



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CMHA Workplace Workshops

Mental Health at Work:

- Awareness
- On the Front Line
- Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout
- Responding with Respect: Workplace Mental Health Skills for Management

Psychological Health and Safety:

- Introduction to PHS
- Supporter Training
- Navigator Training

Lunch and Learn:

- 1-hour workshops



CMHA Resources for Co-workers, Friends and Family Members



**LIVING LIFE
TO THE FULL**
helping you to help yourself



**Confident Parents
Thriving Kids**

<https://bc.cmha.ca/types-programs-services/wellness-programs/>

For your own self

Please consider the following:

- For my own mental wellness, this evening, I will...
- I will take care of my well-being over the next month by...

Writing it down, can help build a self-care routine and practice



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Thank you!

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