
CAREGIVER CONNECTION

April 2026 Edition

Upcoming Caregiver Events

Virtual Working Family Caregiver Support Group: April 1 and May 6 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Call the ADRC at 608-785-5700 to register

Embrace: April 8, April 22, May 13, and May 27 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center

To register call 608-789-8640

A free non-traditional support group that offers fun, engaging and creative activities for people living with dementia. Support and education for caregivers offered in a separate room. Caregivers welcome to attend independently. Loved ones with dementia must have a caregiver present in caregiver group.

Family Caregiver Support Group: April 9 and May 14 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

Franciscan Spirituality Center

No registration is needed.

Caregiver Education April 16 and May 20 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

DASH Center

Call ADRC at 608-785-5700 to register

April Topic: Emergency Planning

May Topic: Benefits 101: Medicare, Medical Assistance, and Veteran's Administration

Compassion Fatigue: What Is It?

Reprinted from Trualta

Compassion fatigue and burnout are both linked to stress, but are they the same thing? Find out signs of compassion fatigue and how to heal.

It's Different Than Burnout

While it may sound similar to burnout, compassion fatigue comes from the impact of helping others— notably, helping people who have experienced something traumatic, stressful, or emotionally painful. It comes from having a great deal of empathy and then feeling exhausted after a long time of having to use that empathy. You may feel weary, like you're completely depleted, and that you have nothing left to give.

Signs Of Compassion Fatigue

It's important to pay attention to your body's physical and mental signs, as compassion fatigue can develop over time. Be on the lookout for:

- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep
- Nausea or dizziness
- Mood swings or changes like feeling sad, numb, angry, or irritable. For example, you may cry more easily.
- Feeling powerless, hopeless, or helpless

- Reduced sympathy and empathy
- Feeling emotionally, physically, and mentally exhausted
- Decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities, or not taking care of your own needs
- Guilting or blaming yourself for not being able to give more or help your care recipient who is suffering
- Thinking over and over about your care recipient's suffering and feeling angry about the people or circumstances that caused the suffering

What Contributes The Most To Your Fatigue?

You may find that different people or situations cause you more fatigue than others. This is normal. Pay attention to how these experiences make you feel. Do what you can to identify the warning signs that something is becoming too much. For example:

- Taking down drug information from the pharmacist may feel easy, but you find exercise recommendations from the physical therapist stressful because your care recipient experiences intense pain.
- Performing care tasks that upset your care recipient (like bathing or toileting) feel more stressful to you compared to tasks that are neutral or pleasurable for them.
- Managing decisions about care, whether big or small, can make you feel lonely if you're the only one responsible for deciding.

Healing From Compassion Fatigue

It's possible to heal from compassion fatigue. The first step is identifying the source of what's making you feel weary so that you can use strategies to start addressing it. Some strategies you could try include:

- **Take note of your signs** of compassion fatigue. Now that you're aware of them, you'll be better able to recognize when things are becoming too much.
- **Remind yourself what you can control.** You can't control your care recipient's condition or how they feel about it, but you can control how you respond to it.
- **Define enough.** On the days you feel weary, ask yourself "What could I get done today that would feel like enough?"
- **Identify priorities.** Ask yourself "What **must** get done today" and only do those things. If those tasks are too much, consider who you can ask for help.
- **Take a time out.** Do things that replenish your energy. Giving your mind a break can give you a new perspective on a situation or can simply help you recharge your emotional "battery".
- **Take time to do things for yourself,** even if it's something small like going outside for 5 minutes to breathe in the fresh air and feel the sun on your face.
- **Set boundaries with family members.** For example, telling them how often you'll share updates, when you'll receive texts or calls, or how you'll respond when they give unsolicited advice.
- **Seek professional help** if you need it.