

Self-care ideas to help... avoid compassion fatigue and survive burnout

These do not replace professional advice. Self-care is also recognising when we need to ask for help or seek professional support ourselves.



Connect with your sense of wellbeing.

These links are worth exploring <https://proqol.org/proqol-health-1> and <https://proqol.org/>. There are other tools which can help identify issues which suggest compassion fatigue and burnout. Choose one which works for you.



Remember why you are doing this.

It's helpful to reflect back on why we entered the caring professions and what we have achieved so far in our career, and the obstacles we have already overcome to get to where we are. Living our values also supports our wellbeing. This piece may be of interest thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/12/Values-activity-PSWS.pdf



Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

Sometimes we go into autopilot. We do not listen to what our body and mind is trying to tell us. Learning to be in the moment offers us an opportunity to recognise these thoughts and feelings and to take steps to redress the balance when we are feeling overwhelmed. These sites may be of interest capacitar.org/ and www.freemindfulness.org/download and moodgym.com.au/ There are others. Find a practice which works for you and you can bring into your everyday.



Give yourself permission to look after you.

It's not selfish to care for our own wellbeing also. Pushing ourselves to go on when we ourselves are unwell and need time off is not healthy for our wellbeing or those in our care. We can often think it's impossible to make time for ourselves, but there is a price to pay in continually neglecting our own wellbeing. Allowing ourselves to stop, look after ourselves enables us to continue doing what drove us to become a health and care professional in the first place. This piece with video may be of interest www.cope-scotland.org/wellbeing-tips/entry/why-do-we-think-putting-on-our-own-oxygen-mask-first-is-selfish

Recognise boundaries.

We cannot do it all, and we cannot make everything better for everyone no matter how hard we try. We do the best we can and look after ourselves so we can do our best, but there are things beyond our control and it is important to recognise this to avoid unnecessary guilt when things don't work out the way we would have wanted for other people. It is also all right on occasions to say no. This doesn't mean we do not care, its simply being realistic about what is in our control and our gift to give. This podcast may be of interest the-qnis-podcast.captivate.fm/episode/setting-boundaries

Our working environment

We spend a lot of time at work and in the caring professions this can be a stressful working environment where we are exposed frequently to the suffering of others. It is important then to have a culture in work which is supportive of the wellbeing of those who care for others. This includes supportive supervision and that support is there from seniors on a regular basis, including time to debrief when needed, as well as time for informal downtime together, maybe creating a team affirmation jar, something which brings joy into work and is celebrated at the end of a shift. It's also important new members of the team have time to get orientated and feel part of the team. There are many ideas to promote a supportive working environment e.g. www.ihl.org/education/training/creating-workforce-joy-and-well-being and 15s30m.co.uk/ You may also consider setting up a peer wellbeing support group. This piece offers some ideas on how to get started www.cope-scotland.org/wellbeing-tips/entry/in-many-settings-peer-support-matters

What are the pieces you need for your wellbeing?

Its amazing how we know what tips to offer others for their wellbeing, but do not always practice these ourselves. We are aware of the impact of diet, hydration, exercise, relaxation, sleep, connections outside of work, hobbies and interest, but do we invest the time in bringing them into our everyday? This simple tool is a helpful way to think about the pieces you recognise as having importance for your wellbeing. www.cope-scotland.org/wellbeing-tips/entry/identifying-the-pieces-which-support-your-well-being-jigsaw-lid Once you identify the pieces you can then plan how to bring them into your everyday. This workbook may be of interest www.cope-scotland.org/wellbeing-tips/entry/getting-back-your-oomph-when-the-world-has-left-you-feeling-flat This does not replace professional advice.

Knowing we are not alone.

We are all unique and our experiences are ours alone. However, knowing others may also be having similar thoughts and feelings can help us understand this isn't something that is 'wrong with us'. Rather, this is a reaction we are having to something going on outside of us. The job is stressful and if we do not look after ourselves, can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout. Being part of a network can also be a source of support: this can be an informal social network where you share a common interest or hobby; it can also be a network of individuals who share common goals e.g. the Q community — a connected community working together to improve health and care quality across the UK and Ireland — q.health.org.uk/ If you are interested in developing your networks or your role in them this may be of interest www.cope-scotland.org/wellbeing-tips/entry/developing-networking-skills

"Please remember, you matter too. In a world full of problems and challenges you are part of the solution, it is allowed that you also care about your own wellbeing."

Hilda Campbell MBE



Q is led by the Health Foundation
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