

Practical Tools for Foster Parents to Increase Compassion Satisfaction and Ward off Compassion Fatigue

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“Compassion is the antitoxin of the soul; where there is compassion even the most poisonous impulses remain relatively harmless.”

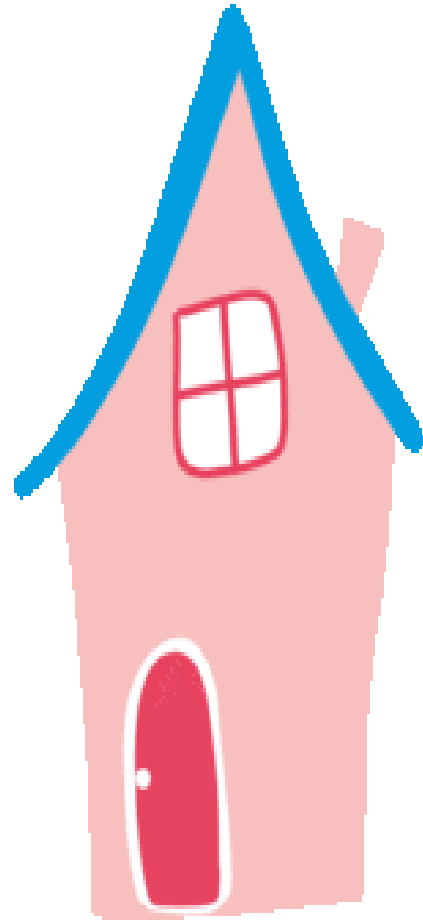
Eric Hoffer



**SURVIVAL
STARTS HERE**

Objectives

- Dr. Charles Figley and Compassion Fatigue
- What is Compassion Fatigue v. Compassion Satisfaction
- Risk factors
- What foster parents care about
- Professional Quality of Life Scale
- Personal Values – Your Personal Compass
- Art of Self-Compassion
- Learn to Be Present, Open Up, Do What Matters
- Tips!



A LOVING
HOME FOR
EVERY CHILD

Dr. Charles Figley

Marine during the Vietnam War

Created the term “Compassion Fatigue” through personal experience

- Credits CF for costing him his first marriage
- Noticed it in other professionals

“The demand to be compassionate with people that you try to help and understand by seeing the world from their perspective....in the process of doing that, you let yourself into their world.”

Vocabulary

Compassion Satisfaction	Positive aspects of being a Foster Parent
Compassion Fatigue	Negative aspects of being a foster parent
Burnout	Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed
Work-related traumatic stress	Primary traumatic stress direct target of event Secondary traumatic exposure to event due to a relationship with the child/children



Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping
 - Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, care giving systems
- May be related to
 - Providing care
 - To the system
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
 - Altruism

Compassion Fatigue

The negative aspects of helping. Experienced by caregivers of people and animals. Can lead to preoccupation with suffering of others and can lead to apathy, anger, depression, grief, and even substance use have occurred.

The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to:

- Providing care
- To the system
- Work with colleagues
- Beliefs about self

Burnout

Work-related trauma

Relationships Are Complex



- Multiple spheres
 - Work environment
 - Personal environment
 - Previous situations
 - Personality traits (Caregivers gonna care)
- Positive (CS) & negative (CF)
- Altruism CS can override CF
- Compassion Fatigue two parts
 - Worn out (BO) common
 - Frightened, traumatized (STS) rarer but powerful



Burnout and STS: Co-Travelers

- Burnout
 - Work-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy
- STS
 - Work-related secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events
- Both share negative affect
 - Burnout is about being worn out
 - STS is about being afraid

What Foster Parents Care About



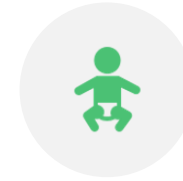
Behavioral health challenges of children (substance abuse, mental illness, preventing pregnancy and STIs, ages and stages of child development, and dealing with aggression).



Better communication between all parties



Their own families and personal obligations and how fostering impacts them



Birth parents



The challenge of "letting go"



And so much more....

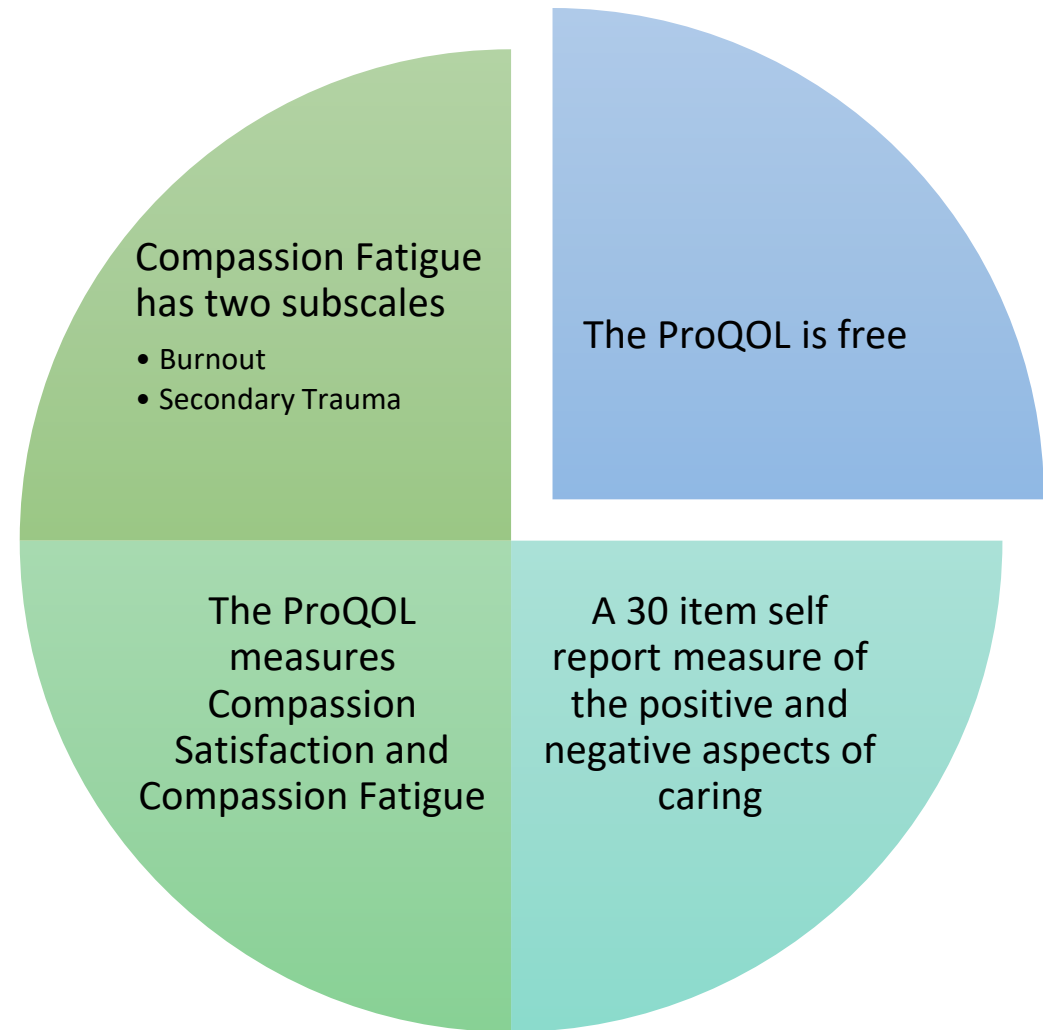
How Do I Deal With..?

- Everything is a crisis around here!
- Self-care, Schmelf Care. Who has time?
- No appreciation



Measuring CS & CF:

The *Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)*



The ProQOL Scales

- Compassion Satisfaction-average score is 50. Scoring below 40, you may have a problem with your job.
- Burn-Out-average score is 50. Scoring above 57 you may be feeling you're not effective in your position
- Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)-average score is 50. Scoring above 57 may mean something is frightening to you at work

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION 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 [helper]. 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
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_____ 2.					
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Family Values – Your True North



Who do I (we) want to be about deep in my (our) heart(s)?



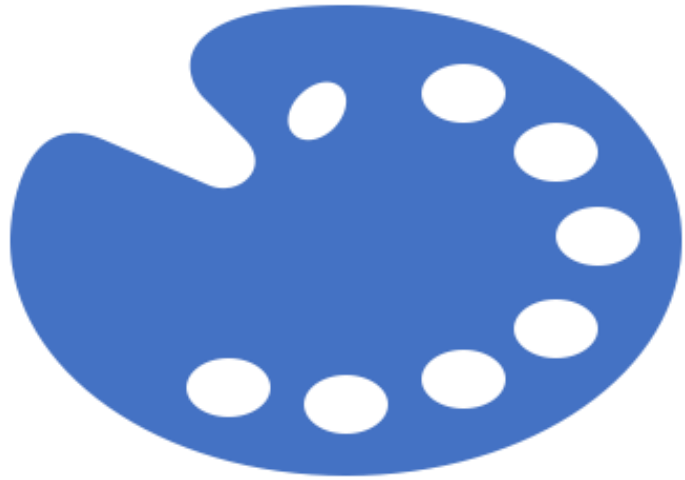
When people describe me (us), I want them to say...



When I (we) feel challenged and pushed to my (our) limit, I (we) want to be found doing what?



Why is this important? Because if you don't know YOU, you won't know when you are in trouble.



The Art of Self-Compassion

Acknowledging your own suffering and responding kindly

Dr. Russ Harris' Six Elements of Self-Compassion

1. Acknowledging the Pain
2. Defusing from Self-Judgement (unhooking)
3. Acting with Kindness (Self-talk, Imagery, Self-touch, Deeds)
4. Acceptance (Does not mean suck it up)
5. Validation
6. Connectedness (From thoughts of being alone, Engage with others)

Be Present, Open Up, Do What Matters

Learning STOP!

- S (Slow Your Breathing)
- T (Take Note)
- O (Open Up)
- P (Pursue Your Values)



MORE TIPS



SEE A PROFESSIONAL ...
THE SOONER THE BETTER!

Love, Work, Play, Health

Eat well

Sleep!

Exercise

Do fun things

Nurture your primary
relationships

Find/Create Foster Support
Groups

Find/utilize respite services

Seek reassurance

Develop a routine

Values-guided work

Set boundaries as necessary

Let's Rehash

Compassion Satisfaction good. Compassion Fatigue bad.

Values-guided self-compassion

Use the recommended tips

The ProQOL is a tool that can help you determine if you may have CF



Resources

- B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009-2012. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL). www.proqol.org
- Geiger, J.M., Julien-Chinn, F.J., Lietz, C.A. (2014) Foster Parent Satisfaction Survey. Arizona State University: Phoenix, AZ
- Harris, R. (2015). How to develop self-compassion in just about anyone. Retrieved from [Www.ImlearningAct.com](http://www.ImlearningAct.com).
- Strosahl, K., Robinson, P, & Gustavsson, T. (2012). *Brief interventions for radical behavior change: Principles and practice of focused acceptance and commitment therapy*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications