

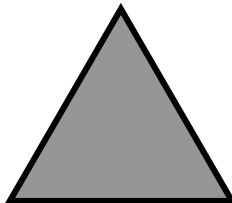
DECISIONAL BALANCE

Regarding Addressing Professional Burnout

MOTIVATORS FOR CHANGE

MOTIVATORS FOR STATUS QUO

<p><u>Benefits of Change</u></p>	<p><u>Benefits of Status Quo</u></p>
<p><u>Costs of Status Quo</u></p>	<p><u>Costs of Change</u></p>



EXERCISE

HOW MANY BURNOUT/STRESS FACTORS DO YOU HAVE?

Maslach & Leiter (2008) have identified 7 key areas contributing to burnout and stress. Take a moment to honestly answer these questions to assess your own level of stress.

Do you:

Feel you have a sustainable workload? _____

Feel overloaded with work? _____

Do you:

Have a feeling of choice or control in your work environment? _____

Experience little or no control? _____

Do you:

Have a sense of reward and recognition at work? _____

Feel little or no recognition or reward? _____

Do you:

Experience a sense of community or belonging in your work environment? _____

See a breakdown in a sense of community or belonging? _____

Do you:

Experience fairness, justice and respect at work? _____

See little respect or fairness in your work setting? _____

Do you:

See your work as meaningful and in line with your values? _____

Experience a significant clash in values between you and the agency? _____

Do you:

See a good fit between you (who you are as a person) and your job? _____

Experience some disconnect between you (who you are as a person) and your job?

If you answered most of the above items in the negative, you may struggle with significant external stress which needs to be dealt with by either a change in thinking or in the situation or both. Possible interventions will be discussed in the next section of this book.

The previous exercise may have helped you identify which stress factors are present in your work situation and to what extent these are creating problems. Another index of the intensity or impact of stressors is the following analysis. If we examine the dimensions of control, demand and support, it appears from the research that minimum job stress occurs when there is high control, low demand and high support. These three factors probably interact in a critical way and may exacerbate or diminish the effects of each other. For example, if an individual works in a highly stressful job where he has many demands made on him by clients and staff, the effects of this stressor (high demand) may be mitigated by the fact that the individual also feels he has a lot of support from his agency and perceives that he has some control over the environment (chooses to see challenging cases or opts for a high case load). If the same situation occurs (high demand from clients and staff) but is combined with a low level of support (or perceived support) from supervisors and staff plus a perceived lack of control of autonomy over the situation (more and more clients are scheduled without consultation or discussion) the individual is likely to be maximally stressed and potentially a candidate for burnout.

The worksheet on the following page will help to identify each of these factors (demand, control and support) in your work environment.

EXERCISE

How Much Control, Demand and Support is Present in Your Situation?

Establishing where you are on each of these three dimensions can be evaluated by asking yourself the following questions:

Control:

Do I feel I have influence over what happens at work? Yes _____ No _____
Do I feel I have freedom to decide how I do my work? Yes _____ No _____

Answering yes to both questions indicates high control, answering no to both indicates low control.

Demand:

Do I have to work very hard? Yes _____ No _____
Do I not have enough time to get my work done? Yes _____ No _____
Is my work load excessive? Yes _____ No _____

Answering all three questions yes indicates high demand, answering all three no indicates low demand.

Support:

Do I work with helpful people who have an interest in me? Yes _____ No _____
Do I have a supervisor who is helpful and who takes an interest in me? Yes _____ No _____

Answering yes to both questions indicates high support, answering no to both indicates low support.

So, looking at the above and where you put yourself in terms of your work experience with control (high or low), demand (high or low), and support (high or low), might alert you to steps which may need to be taken to promote a greater sense of control, a reduced sense of demand, and an increased sense of support.

Stress is a combination of external and internal factors. That is to say we experience external stressors (client or organizational demands) which can be exacerbated by our own tendencies and predispositions which result in a consequent high level of distress or impairment. This, as readers will note, is consistent with the cognitive behavioral model described earlier in the text. This suggests that situations or external events do not lead directly to emotional or behavioral consequences but are mediated through thoughts and beliefs. This is often described as the ABC model where A= activating events, B= beliefs and C= consequences. While many people adopt an AC model where events lead straight to emotions ("He made me so mad when he said that"), it is clear that the ABC model is more accurate ("After he said that I got upset because that showed he has no respect for me"). Clearly beliefs and thoughts play a crucial role in stress reactions. In a work situation, for example, when a client consistently fails to follow through on homework assignments, this situation will trigger much greater distress in the therapist if she thinks, "He is doing this to interfere with my therapy," than if she thinks, "We need to work out what the obstacles to him doing homework are and find a way around these."

The exercise on the next page encourages you to identify external (situations) and internal (beliefs, behaviors and circumstances related to you) stressors which may both be involved in your stress reactions.

EXERCISE

IDENTIFYING YOUR EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL STRESSORS

The following checklist may be helpful in identifying both external and internal stressors.

External stressors

Do you experience the following?

- Low peer support
- Low supervisor support
- Insufficient salary or other rewards
- Many demanding clients
- Long hours
- No or poor on-job training
- High organizational conflict
- Little focus on personal development or self-care in agency

Internal stressors

Do you have problems with any of these?

- Poor professional boundaries
- Poor self-care
- Overly idealistic or unrealistic expectations of clients or agency
- Imbalanced lifestyle (lack of recreation)
- Intolerance of things not going well or of being unsuccessful
- Poor understanding of, or attending to, one's own needs
- Lack of a sustaining personal or spiritual life
- Perfectionism
- Inability to say "no"
- Lack of a sense of humor or being overly serious
- Perception of lack of success with clients
- Unfavorable comparisons (made by self) with colleagues
- Negative self-evaluation
- Failure to ask supervisors or peers for help

While it is obvious that the second group of stressors revolves around personal characteristics or beliefs, it is important to see that one's own perception may also influence the impact of the first group of stressors. For example, the experience of low supervisor support may be the reality, or alternately it may possibly be a misperception of the supervisor, or due to your not asking for help or support and presenting an image of "having everything together."

SELF-HELP FORM

LEARNING ABOUT COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS (11 WAYS TO MAKE YOURSELF MISERABLE)

Cognitive distortions are inaccuracies in our thinking. We can think of our thoughts as representations of reality, sort of like a photograph. If we have a smudge on the lens of the camera, then the photo will show a picture that does not accurately represent what was in front of the camera. Even if the lens is clear but we take a picture of only part of an object, then the picture will not accurately portray the whole object. It is safe to assume that everyone engages in cognitive distortions at times, especially during times of distress. It can be very helpful to be able to identify distortions in your thinking, because once you have discovered the distortion, you will know how to correct it and feel better. Identifying your cognitive distortions is like diagnosing the thought problem. A good diagnosis usually points to a helpful remedy. Below is a list of eleven common distortions with examples of how they might occur. See if you can identify one or more ways that you have engaged in this kind of thinking.

All or Nothing/Black or White: Seeing things as though there were only two possible categories.

Example: If a situation turns out imperfectly, you see it as a total failure. You forget to buy one item on a shopping list and think, "Well, I really blew that trip." Can you think of an example of how you have used this distortion?

Try writing it down below:

Overgeneralizing: A negative event is seen as part of a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Example: When shopping you notice that your check-out line is moving very slowly and think, "Why do I always pick the slowest line?"

Your example:

Mental Filter: Seeing only negative aspects of a situation while screening out the positive aspects.

Example: You focus on a critical comment a client made while ignoring all the positive feedback you received.

Your example:

Jumping to Conclusions: Predicting things will go a certain way before you have the facts.

Example: You hear that the agency will be cutting back on staff, and you assume you will be among the first to go.

Your example:

Mind-Reading: Assuming that you know exactly what someone is or will be thinking about you.

Example: A colleague doesn't seem as friendly as usual and you think, "He must be angry with me."

Your example:

Fortune-telling: Predicting that things will turn out badly and that you won't be able to cope.

Example: Before going into a therapy session, you have an image of a client reacting negatively to something you say, and you assume that you will be bothered by this.

Your example:

Magnifying or Minimizing: Over-valuating or minimizing the importance of a situation or certain information.

Example: Even though you may be an effective helper, you are upset by the one client who terminated because he didn't feel he was being helped.

Your example:

Emotional Reasoning: Assuming that how you feel is an accurate reflection of how things are.

Example: If you are feeling anxious, you assume that something bad is going to happen.

Your example:

Shoulds: You tell yourself things "should" or "shouldn't" be a certain way. We do this with ourselves, with other people and situations. Variations of this can include "musts", "have to's" and other imperatives which sound like they come from some authority figure.

Example: "I shouldn't have done that" or, "I must prepare better for meetings."

Your example:

Labeling: This is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking which can be damaging to our self esteem and our relationships.

Example: Instead of simply acknowledging a mistake, we say, "I'm such a screw-up" (substitute "loser," "idiot," "jerk," etc.). Applying labels to ourselves or others ("that SOB") will tend to blind us to other qualities which we or others have.

Your example:

Personalizing (Blaming): This distortion creates enormous preventable suffering. It occurs when we hold ourselves responsible for something that isn't or wasn't entirely under our control. When this process is reversed, we blame someone else entirely for a situation we have a part in creating.

Example: Someone who noticed a colleague who didn't seem as friendly as usual thought, "I must have done something wrong."

Your example:

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 |
|---------|---|-------------|---------|--------------|
| ___ 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 [helper]. | | | |
| ___ 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 [helper]. | | | |
| ___ 11. | Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things. | | | |
| ___ 12. | I like my work as a [helper]. | | | |
| ___ 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 am able to keep up with [helping] 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 [helper]. | | | |
| ___ 20. | I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them. | | | |
| ___ 21. | I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load 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 experience of the people I [help]. | | | |
| ___ 24. | I am proud of what I can do to [help]. | | | |
| ___ 25. | As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts. | | | |
| ___ 26. | I feel "bogged down" by the system. | | | |
| ___ 27. | I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper]. | | | |
| ___ 28. | I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims. | | | |
| ___ 29. | I am a very caring person. | | | |
| ___ 30. | I am happy that I chose to do this work. | | | |

© B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009-2012. *Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL)*. www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold. Those interested in using the test should visit www.proqol.org to verify that the copy they are using is the most current version of the test.

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 then 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	So My Score Equals	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 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

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

You Wrote	Change to
	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

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 the effects of helping when you are *not* happy so you reverse the score.

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

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 then 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	So My Score Equals	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

© B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009-2012. *Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL)*. www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold. Those interested in using the test should visit www.proqol.org to verify that the copy they are using is the most current version of the test.

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, place your personal scores below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

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 probably 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 _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of Compassion Fatigue (CF) 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 very 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 43, this probably 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; perhaps you were having a “bad day” or are in need of 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 _____

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 other's trauma is somewhat 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. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example, field work in a war or area of civil violence, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, for example, as a therapist or an emergency worker, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular 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.

© B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009-2012. *Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL)*. www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold. Those interested in using the test should visit www.proqol.org to verify that the copy they are using is the most current version of the test.

CHECKLIST

SKOVHOLT PRACTITIONER PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCY AND SELF-CARE INVENTORY

The purpose of the inventory is to provide self-reflection for practitioners and students in the helping, health, and caring professions, broadly defined. All of these fields are relationship-intense fields where the welfare of the other (client, patient, student, advisee, mentee etc.) is primary. "Practitioner" here refers to individuals in these professions. All of these professions are distinct, with specialized areas of knowledge and techniques. However, they are united by the enormous amount of emotional investment needed for the I-Thou relationship with the other who is often experiencing a kind of suffering or human need of one kind or another.

Questions are addressed both to active practitioners and also to students in training programs across the broad range of the caring / relationship-intense professions. Some of the questions are more relevant to some professionals or students in some training programs than others.

The checklist consists of four sub-scales: Professional Vitality, Personal Vitality, Professional Stress and Personal Stress.

Circle your Responses:

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Professional Vitality

1. I find my work as a practitioner or as a student to be meaningful. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I view self-care as an ongoing part of my professional work/student life 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am interested in making positive attachments with my clients/students/patients. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I have the energy to make these positive attachments with my clients/students/patients 1 2 3 4 5
5. The director/chair at my site/school is dedicated to practitioner welfare 1 2 3 4 5
6. On the dimension of control of my work/schooling, I am closer to high control
than low control. 1 2 3 4 5
7. On the dimension of demands at my work/schooling, I have reasonable demands rather
than excessive demands from others 1 2 3 4 5
8. My work environment is like a greenhouse where everything grows, because the conditions
are such that I feel supported in my professional work 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Professional Vitality (Possible score is 8-40) _____

Personal Vitality

9. I have plenty of humor and laughter in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I have a strong code of values/ethics that gives me a sense of direction and integrity. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I feel loved by intimate others. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I have positive/close friendships 1 2 3 4 5
13. I am physically active and receive the benefits of exercise 1 2 3 4 5
14. My financial life (expenses, savings and spending) is in balance 1 2 3 4 5
15. I have a lot of fun in my life 1 2 3 4 5
16. I have one or more abundant sources of high energy for my life
(friends and family, pleasurable hobby, enjoyable pet, the natural world, a favorite activity) 1 2 3 4 5
17. To balance the ambiguity of work in the caring professions, I have some concrete activities that I
enjoy where results are clear-cut (a collection such as coins / rocks / dolls, gardening, a fantasy sports
team, weaving, remodeling and painting, fixing up a car) 1 2 3 4 5

18. My eating habits are good for my body 1 2 3 4 5
 19. My sleep pattern is restorative. 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Personal Vitality (Possible score is 11-55) _____

Professional Stress

20. There are many contradictory messages about both practicing self-care and meeting expectations of being a highly competent practitioner / student. I am working to find a way through these contradictory messages. 1 2 3 4 5
 21. Overall, I have been able to find a satisfactory level of “boundaried generosity” (defined as having both limits and giving of oneself) in my work with clients/students/patients. ... 1 2 3 4 5
 22. Witnessing human suffering is central in the caring professions (for example, client grief, student failure, patient physical pain). I am able to be very present to this suffering, but not be overwhelmed by it or experience too much of what is called “sadness of the soul” 1 2 3 4 5
 23. I have found a way to have high standards for my work yet avoid unreachable perfectionism. 1 2 3 4 5
 24. My work is intrinsically pleasurable most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
 25. Although judging success in the caring professions is often confusing, I have been able to find useful ways to judge my own professional success 1 2 3 4 5
 26. I have at least one very positive relationship with a clinical supervisor / mentor / teacher 1 2 3 4 5
 27. I am excited to learn new ideas/methods/theories/techniques in my field 1 2 3 4 5
 28. The level of conflict between staff / faculty at my organization is low 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Professional Stress (Possible score is 9-45) _____

Personal Stress

29. There are different ways that I can get away from stress and relax (TV and videos, meditating, reading, social media, watching sports). 1 2 3 4 5
 30. My personal life does not have an excessive number of one-way caring relationships where I am the caring one 1 2 3 4 5
 31. My level of physical pain / disability is tolerable. 1 2 3 4 5
 32. My family relations are satisfying 1 2 3 4 5
 33. I derive strength from my personal values and /or spiritual, religious practices and beliefs 1 2 3 4 5
 34. I am not facing major betrayal in my personal life 1 2 3 4 5
 35. I have one or more supportive communities where I feel connected. 1 2 3 4 5
 36. I am able to cope with significant losses in my life 1 2 3 4 5
 37. I have time for reflective activities (alone: journaling, expressive writing, solitude or, with others: talking through concerns with others). 1 2 3 4 5
 38. When I feel the need, I am able to get help for myself 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Personal Stress (Possible score is 10-50) _____

Total Score for the Four Subscales (Possible score is 38-190) _____

There is a total of 38 questions in the Skovholt Professional Resiliency and Self-Care Inventory. All are scored in a positive direction with from 0 (low) to 5 (high). As stated earlier, the scoring system is a method for self-reflection by practitioners and students in the caring professions. There is no total number that is considered best.

As a way to consider professional resiliency and self-care in your career work, consider these questions:
First, scan the questions and focus on your high answers—those with 4 and 5 responses. What do you conclude?

Then focus on your low answers—those with 1 and 2 responses. What do you conclude?

Then look across the four categories of Professional Vitality, Personal Vitality, Professional Stress and Personal Stress. Are they in balance? If not in balance, what remedies could you consider?

Copyright © 2010 Thomas M. Skovholt, 2014 Revised