



# COMPASSION FATIGUE

*HELPING CAN HURT*



**COMPASSION  
FATIGUE**

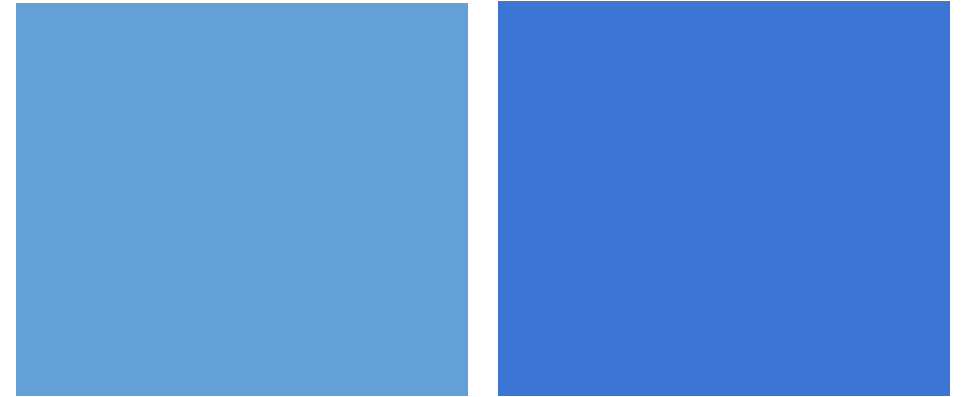
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# HELPING HANDS TRAINING & CONSULTING SERVICES

## I Just Want to Help

Dr. Charles Figley coined the term Compassion Fatigue and defines it as: "**a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress**"; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper."

Compassion fatigue, also known as **secondary traumatic stress (STS)**, is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of compassion over time. Compassion fatigue is a condition that is common among workers who work directly with victims of disasters, trauma, or illness, especially in the health care and human services industry.



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Compassion fatigue can be a precursor or a symptom of other stressors. Because human service practitioners are **trained to utilize compassion and empathy to be effective**, they are particularly vulnerable to emotional stress and compassion fatigue.

Professionals in other occupations are also at risk for **experiencing compassion fatigue**, e.g., attorneys, child protection workers and veterinarians. Other occupations include therapists, child welfare workers, nurses, radiology technologists, teachers, journalists, psychologists, police officers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), firefighters, animal welfare workers, public librarians, and health unit coordinators.

**Non-workers, such as family members** and other informal caregivers of people who are suffering from a chronic illness, may also experience compassion fatigue.

**What do all these professions have in common?**

They all work directly with people and their **decisions directly impact** someone's life.



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We are Helping Hands Training & Consulting Services;  
we offer training and consulting services.

With over 30 years of experience, we are a Human Service collaborative providing our customers with essential tools used for developing, delivering, and assessing programs, policies and best practices. Our methods are based on an understanding of trauma and the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors, ensuring that clients are supported while avoiding re-traumatization.

For more information on this subject contact us.

