

# Understanding Educator Resilience & Developing a Self-Care Plan

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# Understanding Educator Resilience & Developing a Self-Care Plan



U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Safe and Healthy Students

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# Agenda



Introduction to the Topic of Resilience

Understanding Compassion Fatigue & Related Concepts

Developing a Self-Care Plan

Q&A Session

Community of Practice (CoP) Chat

# Welcome



U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Safe and Healthy Students



Readiness and Emergency Management for  
Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA)  
Center

# Featured Presenter



Stephen Hydon  
Clinical Professor, Field Education  
University of Southern California  
School of Social Work

# Intended Outcomes

Better understand  
resilience strategies  
and compassion  
fatigue

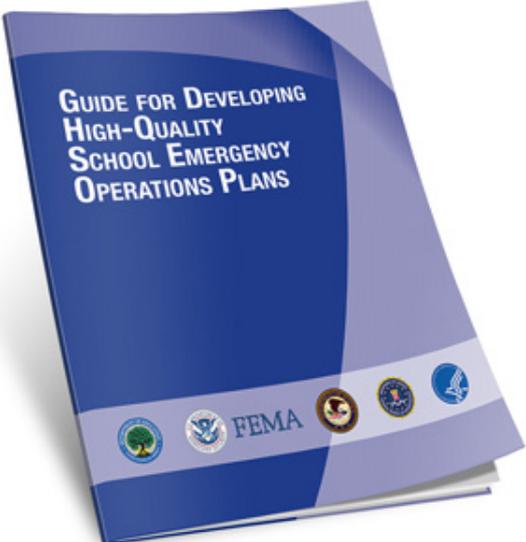
Leave today with  
actionable steps to  
prevent burnout

Be able to work more  
effectively with  
students you serve,  
because you are better  
caring for yourself

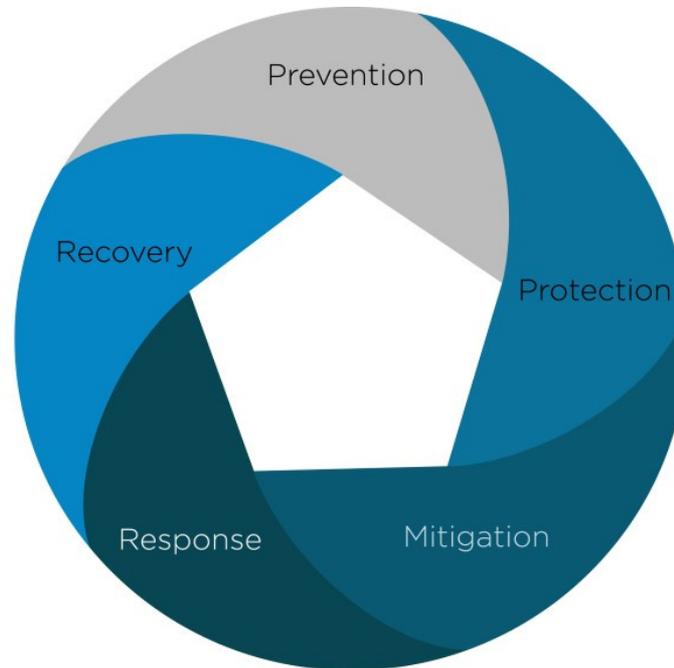
# Federal Alignment on EOP Planning



FEMA



# Five Preparedness Missions



**Before**

**During**

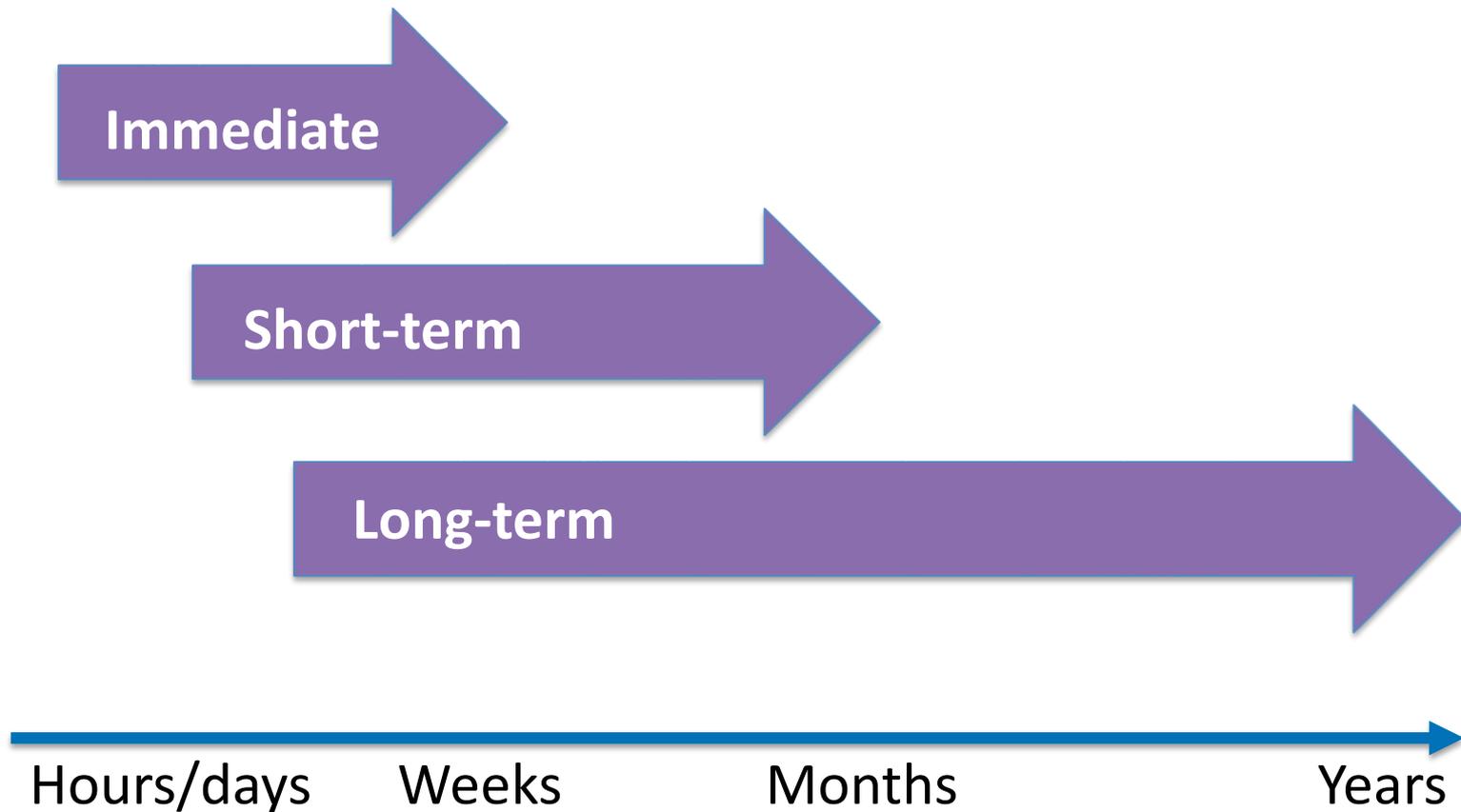
**After**

# What is Recovery?

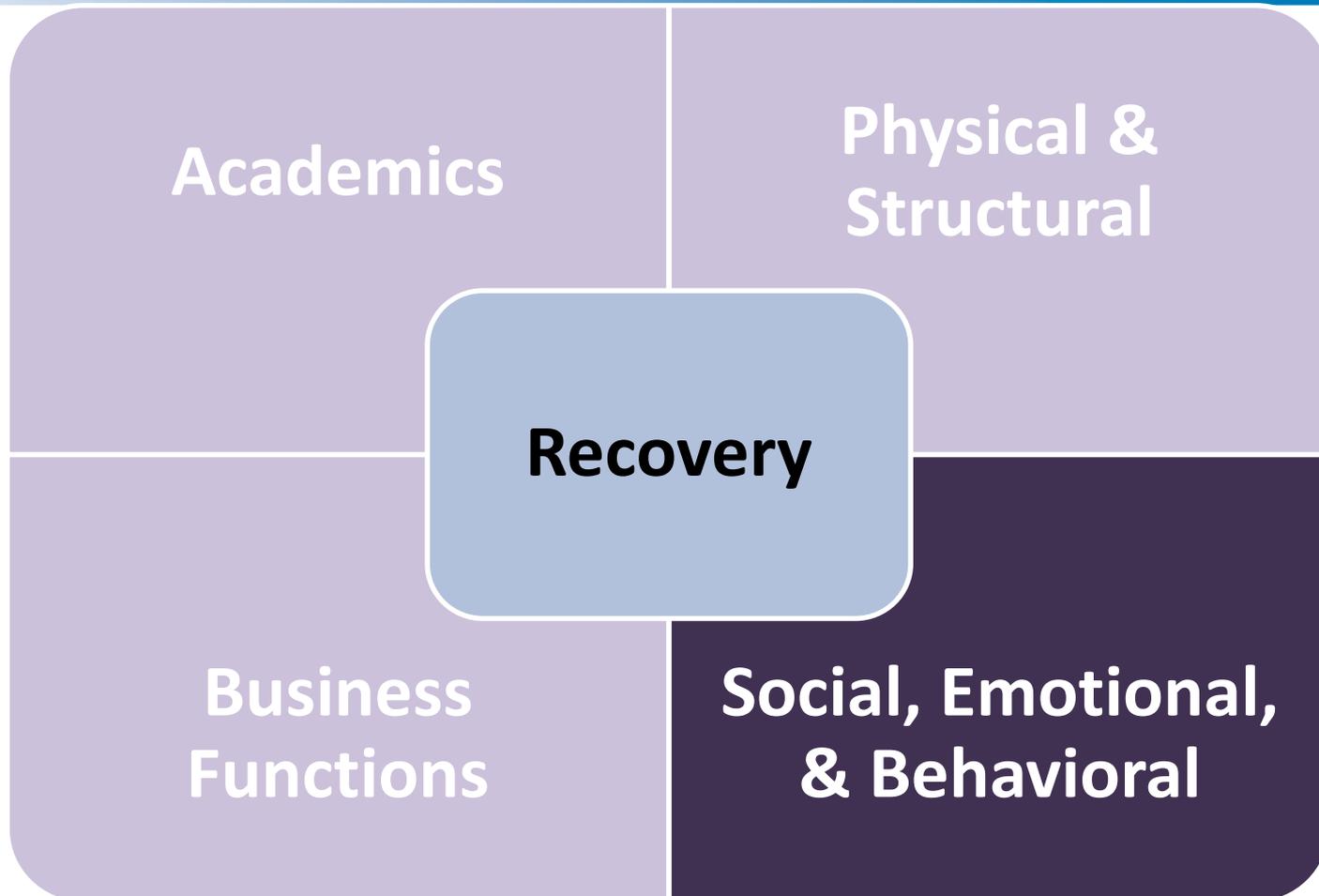


Goal is to return to a sense of “normalcy” by restoring educational programming; the physical environment; business operations; and emotional health and well being of students, staff, and families with community partners.

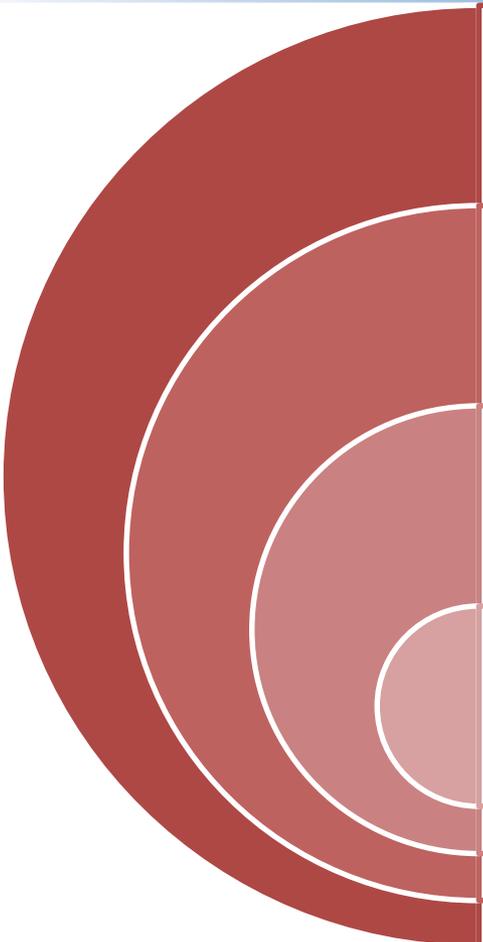
# Timeframes of Recovery



# Recovery Components



# Social, Emotional, & Behavioral Recovery



Provision of Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S)

Conducting ongoing assessments/monitoring

Ensuring staff and teachers have access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Making individual and group crisis counseling available

# Social, Emotional, & Behavioral Recovery (continued)



Referring students, teachers, and staff to long-term interventions, if needed

Providing trauma and grief-focused, school-based mental health programs

Monitoring attendance, grades, and counselor's visits

**Providing care for caregivers to help prevent or reduce compassion fatigue**

# What is Resilience?

Resilience is defined as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress.”

- American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

# Basic Caregiver Resilience Assumptions

Caring and compassion are required when working with stress, loss, and trauma.

Caring and compassion require interest, empathy, and interaction.

Exposure to others' distress can be challenging to educators and other school personnel, particularly if it is associated with their own experiences.

# Basic Caregiver Resilience Assumptions (continued)

Working with others impacted by stress, trauma, and loss can be rewarding and inspire a sense of pride and satisfaction.

Most educators and school personnel have the ability to bounce back or even gain a higher level of functioning—to be resilient—after exposure to stress, trauma, or loss.

Building or enhancing and maintaining resilience is the “antidote” to compassion fatigue.

# What is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is a term that emerged in the 80s and 90s, but is also closely related to the concepts of secondary traumatic stress, secondary victimization, and vicarious traumatization.

# What Are the Distinctions Between:

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Vicarious Trauma

Occupational Burnout

Psychological Burnout

Compassion Satisfaction

# Definitions

Secondary Traumatic Stress – The stress of interpersonal interactions between helper and client; continues to be viewed mainly as a response to dealing with clients, specifically people who have been traumatized. (Galek, Flannelly, Greene, & Kudler, 2011)

Vicarious Trauma – A state of tension and preoccupation arising from the stories/trauma experience described by clients.

# Definitions (continued)

Occupational Burnout – Plain old job burnout stems from dissatisfaction with the work environment vs. compassion fatigue, which stems from absorbing the suffering of clients. (Figley, 2011)

Psychological Burnout – The experience of long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in one's work that is often corrected by changing work settings or clients. (Altman & Jackson, 2005)

# Definitions (continued)

Compassion Satisfaction – The perceived joys derived from experiencing the suffering of others and succeeding in helping relieve it in some way. (Figley, 2002)

# Overall Signs of Compassion Fatigue

Intense connection with those you help

Increased irritability

Pushing yourself too much

Self-esteem changes

Problems with concentration

Reactions similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Physical complaints

# Who Is Vulnerable to Compassion Fatigue?

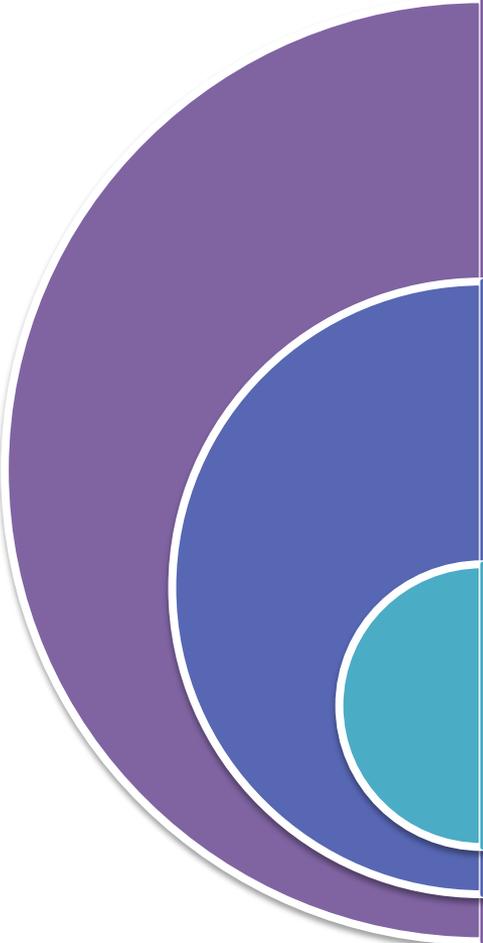
Those who have experienced some traumatic event(s) in their own lives that are unresolved.

Those who work directly with children.

Those who are empathetic.

Those who help others and often neglect their own feelings and needs.

# The ProQOL: A Helpful Resource



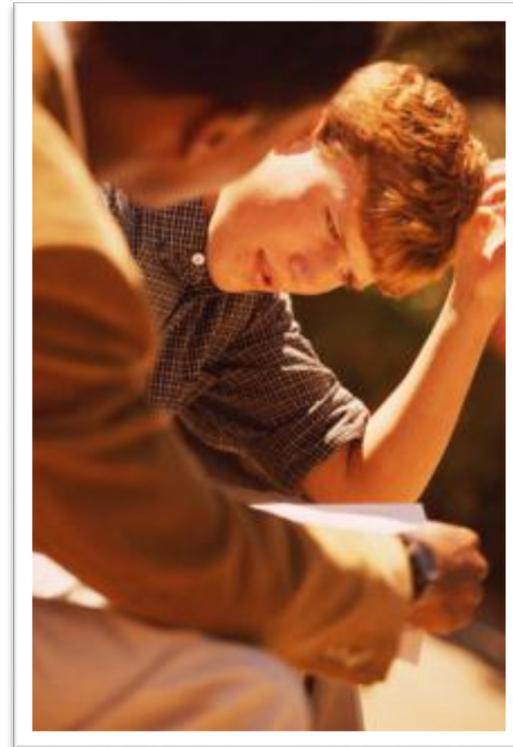
A 30-question survey to self-assess the effect that trauma may be having on our professional lives.

Upon completion, individuals can receive a scaled score for compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress and burnout).

Can be accessed free of charge online in multiple languages at <http://www.proqol.org>.

# Introducing the Seven Topics: Personal Impact of Compassion Fatigue

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Behavioral
4. Cognitive
5. Interpersonal
6. Spiritual
7. Professional



# 1. Physical Impact

- Fatigue
- Numbness
- Nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty sleeping
- Impaired immune system



## 2. Emotional Impact



- Emotional roller coaster or shutdown
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Powerlessness
- Sadness
- Hypersensitivity
- Minimization
- Irritability

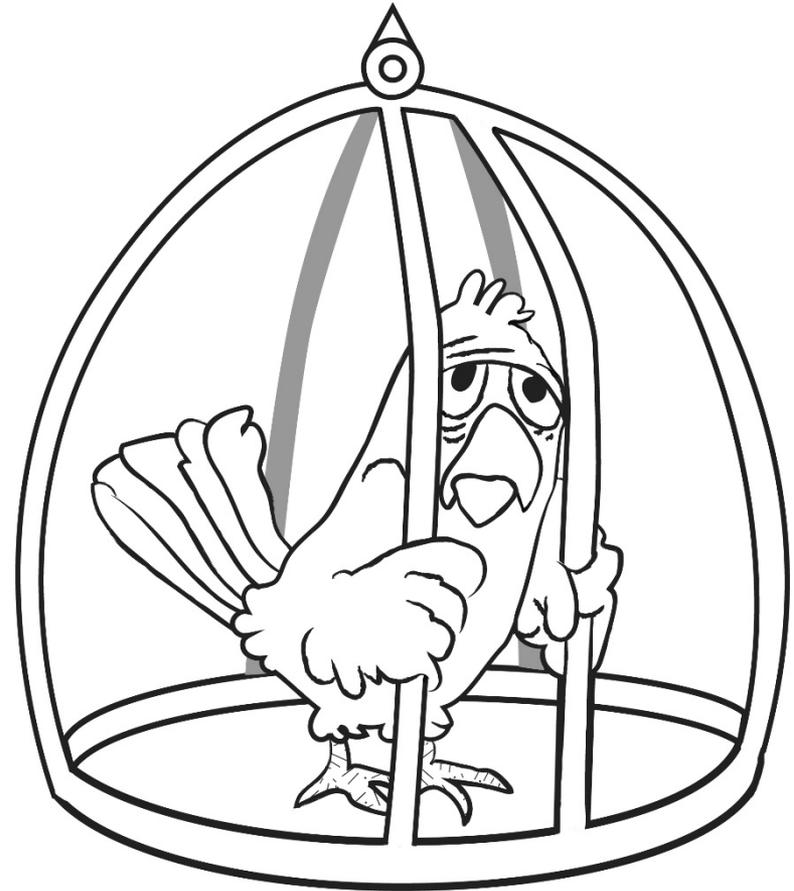
# 3. Behavioral Impact



- Changes in routine
- Changes in interactions with others
- Withdrawal
- Sleep disturbances
- Absent-mindedness and accident proneness
- Self-harm/suicidal behaviors

# 4. Cognitive Impact

- Diminished concentration
- Difficulty in decision-making
- Apathy
- Rigidity
- Self-doubt
- Thoughts of harm
- Blame others



# 5. Interpersonal Impact

- Physically withdrawn
- Emotionally unavailable
- Isolation from family, friends, support systems
- Impact on parenting (protectiveness, abandonment, shame)
- Intolerance
- Loneliness, isolation



# 6. Spiritual Impact

- Questioning the meaning of life
- Loss of purpose
- Anger at God or higher power
- Questioning prior religious or spiritual beliefs



# 7. Professional Impact

- Performance of job tasks
- Morale
- Interpersonal relationships
- Attitude



# Self-Care Defined

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Environmental
- Emotional
- Financial
- Social
- Spiritual
- Occupational



# Definitions

Physical

Intellectual

Environmental

Emotional

# Definitions (continued)

Financial

Social

Spiritual

Occupational

# Developing Your Wellness/Self-Care Plan

What commitments will you make today to taking care of yourself ...

- Physically,
- Emotionally,
- Intellectually,
- Socially,
- Financially, and
- Spiritually?

What kind(s) of support do you need to succeed at making your wellness a priority?

# Self-Care Planning

## Building a Self-Care Action Plan

**V**icarious (secondary) trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout can be prevented. Doing so, however, requires a conscious effort to practice individual self-care strategies on a regular basis, both personally and professionally, to assist in managing vicarious stress.

Here is one example of how to build a self-care plan. There are six categories. These include:

 **Physical Self-Care:**  
The things I do to take of my body in healthy ways. Examples include: sleep; nutrition; exercise; and regular health care visits. How well do you take care of yourself physically? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself physically.

- A.
- B.
- C.

 **Emotional Self-Care:**  
The things I do to take care of my feelings in healthy ways. Examples include maintaining personal and professional support systems; counseling and/or therapy as needed; journaling; and talking about feelings in healthy ways. How well do you take care of yourself emotionally? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself emotionally.

- A.
- B.
- C.

 **Cognitive Self-Care:**  
The things I do to improve my mind and understand myself better. Examples include: reading for pleasure or work; writing; and engaging in continued education for additional knowledge/skill. How well do you take care of yourself psychologically? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself psychologically.

- A.
- B.
- C.

 **Social Self-Care:**  
The things I do in relation to others and the world around me. Examples include: spending time with friends, family, and colleagues you enjoy; having fun and playing; belonging to groups, communities and activities that encourage positive social connections. How well do you take care of yourself socially? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself socially.

- A.
- B.
- C.

 **Financial Self-Care:**  
Things I do to spend and save responsibly. Examples include: balancing a checking account; planning for the future; and spending money in thoughtful and productive ways. How well do you take care of yourself financially? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself financially.

- A.
- B.
- C.

 **Spiritual Self-Care:**  
The things I do to gain perspective on my life. Examples include: prayer; meditation; contact with nature; connection with God or a Higher Power; participating in worship with a community; and 12-Step Recovery. How well do you take care of yourself spiritually? Identify three activities that you currently and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself spiritually.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Now you've read the checklist and made a list of strategies for yourself. That is not enough. The bottom line is that self-care requires a conscious effort to practice individual wellness strategies on a regular basis. If we are able to make a commitment to do so both personally and professionally, we can prevent the negative consequences of compassion fatigue and stay well on the journey to student success.

Worksheets from Making Professional Wellness a Priority! By Mona M. Johnson, 2002

# Challenges to Self-Care

Making time

Feeling guilt

Believing those around you are doing fine

Lack of support

# Commitment to Self-Care

Make it part of your daily routine.

Find a self-care buddy.

Advocate for self-care as part of your professional development.

Encourage sharing of self-care ideas.

Continue to monitor your compassion fatigue.

Recognize commitment to self-care actions.

# Summary

Discussed concepts of resilience, including caregiver resilience

Identified signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue, both professionally and personally

Discussed creating a professional self-care plan to support and improve effectiveness of current and future work with students impacted by stress, loss and trauma

# Questions & Answers

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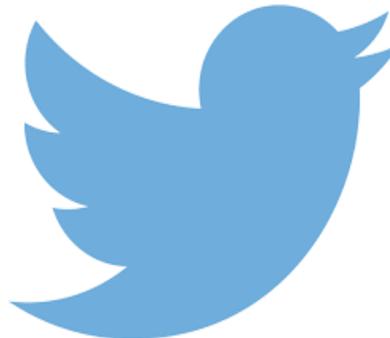


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# Community of Practice (CoP) Chat

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the REMS website with links for HOME, K-12 SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS, HIGHER EDUCATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, and ABOUT US. The main header features the REMS logo and the title "Community of Practice (CoP)" with a map of the United States. Below the title is a description: "A virtual space for schools, school districts, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and their community partners to collaborate, share, and learn from the experiences of others in the field." A secondary navigation bar includes links for CoP HOME, ABOUT THE CoP, FORUMS (highlighted), RULES, and MY PROFILE. A third navigation bar contains links for Recent Topics, Recent Posts, Search, Users, Administrator, Moderator (6), and FAQ. The bottom section shows the "FORUMS" heading, notification counts for Unread Topics (1) and Messages (0), and a user profile link for "administrator my profile".

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## Educator Resilience and Self-Care Plan Web Chat