



## Organizational Culture Foundations Compassion Fatigue Training

### What is Compassion Fatigue?

Many individuals in animal welfare are brought to this work because of their empathy, compassion, and dedication to the mission. In any helping profession, leadership must pay attention to signs of compassion fatigue, both in themselves and their staff. [WebMD defines compassion fatigue](#) as “the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others – often through experiences of stress or trauma.” It may show up through overworking, disrupted sleep, anxiety, depression, physical illness, emotional disconnection, and more, and can compound over time to become burnout.

### Organizational Overview

If your organization is approaching compassion fatigue training for the first time, the following are guides to build a foundation of understanding on key concepts of compassion fatigue. These introductory resources may be utilized in developing training or shared directly with staff and volunteers. Training recommendations may vary by organizational goals and resources.

- [Compassion Fatigue](#) - The American Institute of Stress
- [Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and the Strengths-Based Workplace](#) - NAADAC
- [Running On Empty: Compassion Fatigue in Health Professionals](#) - Compassion Fatigue Solutions and Professional Development
- [Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and The Strengths-Based Workplace Slide Deck](#) - Indian Health Services Leadership Conference 2015

### Training Options

Training options for compassion fatigue may vary based on available resources. To ensure your organization can provide the training best suited for your needs and capacity, consider integrating the following resources and self-evaluations into your current offerings.

#### Free/Low Cost

- [Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project](#)
  - This resource includes a TEDxTalk on managing compassion fatigue in caregiving.
- [Compassion Fatigue Coffee Talk](#) - HSUS

- A one-hour webinar hosted by Hilary Hegar (HSUS) on the topic of compassion fatigue.
- [Wellbeing Assessment for Veterinarians](#) - AVMA My Veterinary Life
- [Compassion Fatigue & Healthcare Professionals: An Online Guide](#) - EduMED
  - This series is specifically designed for healthcare professionals and may have some aspects that do not apply to animal services.
- [Free Intro to Compassion Fatigue Video Training](#) - CaringSafely
  - This series is specifically designed for healthcare professionals and may have some aspects that do not apply to animal services.

## For Purchase

- [Compassion in Balance](#)
  - This resource has options for individual and team training series, as well as live custom webinars for groups.
- [Compassion Fatigue Strategies Plus](#) - UF Shelter Medicine Program
  - An 8-week course on the topic of empathic distress aka compassion fatigue and burnout.

## Tracking Training Efforts

Tracking assignments and completion status allows for easier follow-up or continued training, as well as progress-tracking for organizational goals, especially when providing training to various personnel. If your organization has an established employee and volunteer training protocol, connect with the relevant personnel to integrate new training efforts into the existing process.

## Creating a tracking process for staff and volunteer training

- Before the creation of a new training tracking process, discuss options with leadership and Human Resources at your organization. If available, this may be an opportunity for collaboration within an existing employee management or project management software. Confirm whether volunteers may also be able to use this software if volunteer training is also required.
  - If an existing software solution is not available, consider who may need access to the tracking information and how the organization currently tracks training progress such as spreadsheets, documents, forms, etc.
- Identify the person(s) responsible for the management and distribution of training. How do they currently track training efforts? Is this process working, or should it be updated?
  - Who needs access to monitor training progress files? How do they currently monitor progress? Is this process working, or should it be updated?
  - Should the training progress files be digital or physical documents?

- Is there a budget to purchase a Learning Management System (LMS) for the organization to track training progress? *Note: An LMS can both distribute training materials and track progress.*
- Consider if there are different processes in place for employee versus volunteer training efforts. Is there an opportunity to combine the processes? If not, ensure both are updated when changes are made.
- If creating a new tracking system, consider including the following items:
  - First and last name (Trainee)
  - Email (Trainee)
  - Title/Role (Trainee)
  - Direct supervisor
  - Type of training assigned
  - Training required? Y/N
  - Date assigned
  - Assigned by or required by (Ex: Supervisor assignment, HR requirement, Grant fulfillment requirement)
  - Due date
  - Scheduled check-in date
  - Responsible for check-in (Person)
  - Date of completion
  - Notes
- If there is an interest in tracking not only the status and progress of training, but also time spent, consider adding a metric for the length of time the training will take. You may later use this in reports to calculate time spent as an organization, or individuals, to complete assigned training assignments.
- Consider adding training to the onboarding process for all new personnel
- Consider integrating collection of training process feedback for continuous improvement.

### Sample Solutions (Spreadsheet Based)

- [Simplified Tracking Sheet for Training Assignments](#) - Suitable for any size group or training assignments, but does not elaborate on details or follow-up procedure.
- [Tracking Sheet for Training Assignments I](#) - Suitable for small personnel groups and limited training assignments.
- [Tracking Sheet for Training Assignments II](#) - Suitable for larger groups and training assignments if software is not available. As resources allow, it may be beneficial to consider non-spreadsheet tracking options for ease.

### Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Learning management systems vary greatly when it comes to cost, capacity, simplicity of use, and best fit for organizational goals. We highly recommend your organization take the time to complete individual research on the solution that makes the most sense for your organizational needs. To get you started, here is a short list of existing LMS systems you may consider:

- Cypher Learning LMS
- TalentLMS
- Absorb
- iSpring
- Docebo
- D2L Brightspace LMS
- Blackboard Learn LMS
- Canvas LMS
- Moodle LMS
- Adobe Learning Manager

## Supporting Resources

- [Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized](#) - Edited by Charles R. Figley, Ph.D.
  - This is the complete research-based book referenced in many compassion fatigue trainings, including those outlined above.