



Tips for Secondary Traumatic Stress

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Compassion is at the heart of your work, and at the heart of you. But excessive demands on your empathy can leave you worn down, numb, dreading your next day, and wishing you could stop the awful and exhausting feeling that you're drowning in the suffering of others. This is secondary traumatic stress, also called compassion fatigue.

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WHAT'S REALLY IN IT? HIDDEN VEGETABLE RECIPIES

Brought to you monthly by your Employee Wellness Committee

Log onto [EPS Staff Wellness webpage](#) to download this month's hidden vegetable recipe:
Banana
Cauliflower
Bread.

[What's really in it?](#)

Every Try Counts!

If you or a loved one struggles with tobacco or nicotine use, don't give up on quitting.

Every try counts!

Cessation is a journey. Most people try several times before they quit long term. Nearly 70 percent of adults who use tobacco and nicotine want to quit, and nearly two-thirds of adults who have smoked cigarettes have quit for good.

Living tobacco and nicotine free helps you breathe easier, feel better, and have more energy to do what you enjoy. Not only is cessation good for your health and the health of your loved ones, but quitting can save you money. Individuals who smoke a pack a day of cigarettes spend around \$2,292 each year.

Quitting is easier when you have support that you can count on every step of the way.

Learn about the program your health insurance plan offers to help you and your family members [live tobacco and nicotine free](#).

For additional resources for you and your family, visit [Get Help for Quitting Tobacco](#).

There are many reasons to quit tobacco and nicotine.
What's your reason?



If you find yourself experiencing secondary traumatic stress, you are not alone. School employees, especially educators, tend to experience compassion fatigue at greater rates than those in other professions. This is due to the persistent expectation that you will serve as a caretaker for students with emotionally painful experiences.

Here are some warning signs of secondary traumatic stress:

- Feeling exhausted physically and psychologically
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of sleep
- Feeling like you're not as effective or good at your job as before
- Finding yourself becoming more negative or pessimistic
- Difficulty maintaining work/life balance
- Feeling overwhelmed



What can you do if you're experiencing secondary traumatic stress?

With all the current stressors employees are experiencing, we hope at least one of these tips will play a small role in helping you prevent or manage compassion fatigue.

1. Take time for yourself, even for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.
 2. Consider making a list of positive coping strategies to use in times of stress. This might include deep breathing, meditation, taking a walk, talking with a friend, watching a funny movie, or relaxing in a hot bath.
 3. Engage in outside hobbies.
 4. Journal. This is an excellent way to process and release emotions that may arise from your line of work. Taking the time to cultivate self-awareness and connect with your personal thoughts and feelings can help prevent suppression of emotions, which can lead to compassion fatigue over time.
 5. Surround yourself with a support network of collaborative peers and colleagues. Remember, you do not have to deal with this alone.
 6. Connect with friends outside of work. While it is great to have strong relationships with your co-workers, it is equally important to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships outside of work. It can sometimes be difficult for co-workers to avoid talking about work even outside the workplace. Connecting with friends who are not aware of the ins and outs of your work situation can provide much-needed emotional and professional relief.
 7. Set emotional boundaries. The challenge is to remain compassionate, empathetic, and supportive of others without becoming overly involved and taking on another's pain. Setting emotional boundaries helps maintain a connection while still remembering and honoring the fact that you are a separate person with your own needs.
 8. Speak with a counselor if you find yourself feeling emotionally vulnerable, significantly stressed, or overwhelmed. A counselor can help you process your feelings and implement strategies to help you combat compassion fatigue and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- ⇒ Access Everett Public Schools Employee Assistance Program, Magellan Health. [Online](#) or call 1-800-523-5668
- ⇒ Contact your SEBB medical plan. Many plans offer access to support for your emotional and mental well-being.

Make self-care a priority.

Self-care is essential. It isn't a luxury. It keeps you mentally and physically healthy. It's not uncommon for those who are constantly concerned with the needs of others to wind up neglecting their own. Adopt the mantra of flight attendants, "Put your own oxygen mask on before helping others."

A good self-care regimen will look different for each person. Consider:

1. Keeping a routine schedule of restful sleep
2. Maintaining a balance between work and leisure
3. Exercising regularly
4. Aiming for a balanced, nutritious diet
5. Honoring your emotional needs

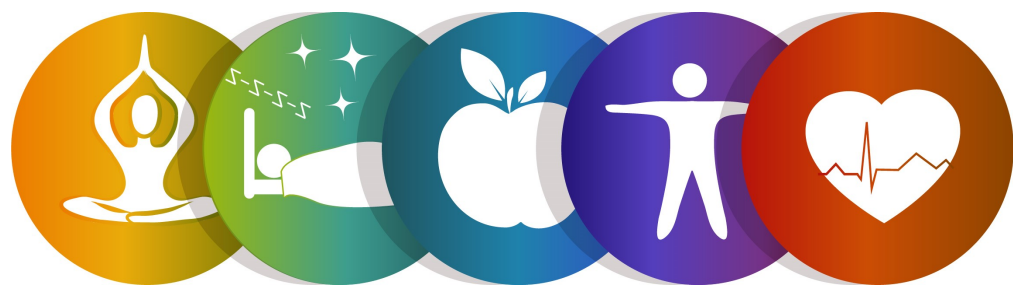


Discover EPS Employee Wellness website

Did you know that Everett Public Schools has a staff wellness program? A committee of EPS staff have been diligently working to bring you wellness ideas, opportunities and resources.

Click [HERE](#) to explore the EPS Staff Health and Wellness website.

Check back often as content will change and grow. Right now you can log in and see the Healthy Eating recipe of the month, course registration information for PESB's Transformative SEL for Educators: Connecting Healthy Selves to Healthy Communities, resources for Diabetes prevention and more.



Wellness snapshot of the month



EPS employees walked from the parking lot at the CRC to Angel of the Winds arena for our October 14 RULER training.