

## Signs and Symptoms of Secondary Traumatization

- Fatigue, loss of energy, taking greater amounts of time to complete the same amount of work, loss of efficiency
- Sadness, depression, withdrawal from others or from activities
- Apathy, indifference, emotional numbness, inability to have strong feelings, “tuning out” while listening to traumatic stories
- Forgetfulness, confusion, difficulty making decisions, difficulty concentrating
- Cynicism, discouragement, loss of compassion, loss of faith/trust in humanity, use of negative stereotypes to form quick judgments
- Demoralization, disillusionment, loss of faith in beliefs that previously gave meaning to life (e.g., religious beliefs), grief, despair
- Difficulty containing your emotions, loss of emotional control, strong emotional reactions to minor events
- Loss of creativity, loss of problem-solving skills
- Loss of sense of humor or playfulness, loss of capacity to feel joy
- Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, lack of control over your life and future
- Feeling alone, isolated, alienated; feeling like others cannot understand you
- Irritability, intolerance, anger and rage
- Disbelief and denial of others’ experiences, especially traumas
- Guilt for having survived trauma or having and “easier” life than others, holding unrealistically high expectations of yourself, denying or downplaying your own pain and/or difficulties
- Preoccupation with safety of self and loved ones, increased sensitivity to violence
- Nightmares, intrusion of violent images into your daily thoughts or activities (“can’t get it out of your head”)
- Sleep disturbances, exaggerated startle response, difficulty relaxing
- Physical complaints: headaches, abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, joint pain, muscle aches or tension, frequent illness

## ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

### Self-Care

Rate the following areas in frequency

- 5 = Frequently
- 4 = ~~Occasionally~~ *Sometimes*
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = It never occurred to me

### PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get preventive medical care
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, or do some other fun physical activity
- Take time to be sexual – with yourself, a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones/*computers*
- Other:

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not expert
- Decrease stress in your life
- Notice your inner experience – listen to your thoughts, judgments, attitudes, feelings
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g. go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
- Practice receiving from others
- Be curious
- So no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other:

### EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Give yourself affirmations, praise
- Love yourself
- Revisit favorite books, movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things that make you laugh
- Express your outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests

### SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time with nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing
- Spend time with children
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which you believe
- Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc...)
- Other:

## WORKPLACE OR PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE

- Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting or rewarding
- Set limits with clients and colleagues
- Balance your caseload so no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- Arrange your workspace so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raises)
- Have a peer support group
- Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
- Other:

## BALANCE

- Strive for balance **WITHIN** your work-life and workday
- Strive for balance **AMONG** work, family relationships, play and rest

## Stressbusters

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- Drop 3 (This is a way to very rapidly reduce your tension level and begin to cope with stress). Sit squarely with feet flat on the floor, back against your chair then drop 3 – let these three areas of your body completely relax:
  1. Drop your **jaw** and let your tongue rest on the floor of your mouth. Your mouth should be open slightly for this to work.
  2. Let your **shoulders** completely relax; let them fall.
  3. Let your **abdominal muscles** relax, don't hold them in.
  
- Take breaks
  
- Spend time with caring friends and family
  
- Take time off work
  
- Exercise regularly
  
- Eat well
  
- Sleep well
  
- Take care of your medical needs
  
- Breathe
  
- Say “no” to commitments you can't manage
  
- Separate from your work at the end of the workday
  
- Engage in a hobby
  
- Read a good book
  
- Smile
  
- Sing
  
- Dance
  
- Get a massage
  
- Create art or music
  
- Write in a journal
  
- Focus on just this moment
  
- Meditate
  
- Do yoga
  
- Pray
  
- Let yourself be helped by others
  
- Volunteer

## **Exercise: *Mindful Breathing***

This Mindful Breathing exercise will help you learn to separate your thoughts from your emotions and physical sensations. Very often, when you're distracted by your thoughts and other stimuli, one of the easiest and most effective things you can do is to focus your attention on the rising and falling of your breath. This type of breathing also causes you to take fuller, deeper breaths, which can help you relax.

In order to breathe mindfully, you need to focus on three parts of the experience. First, you must count your breaths. This will help you focus your attention, and it will also help you calm your mind when you're distracted by thoughts. Second, you need to focus on the physical experience as you inhale and exhale. And third, you need to be aware of any distracting thoughts that arise while you're breathing. Then you need to let the thoughts go without getting stuck on them. Letting go of the distracting thoughts will allow you to refocus your attention on your breathing and help you further calm yourself.

Read the instructions before beginning the exercise to familiarize yourself with the experience. If you feel more comfortable listening to the instructions, use an audio-recording device to record the directions in a slow, even voice so that you can listen to them while practicing this technique. When you first start this technique, set a timer or an alarm clock for three to five minutes, and practice breathing until the alarm goes off. Then as you get more accustomed to using this technique to help you relax, you can set the alarm for longer periods of time, like 20 minutes or more. But don't expect to be able to sit still that long when you first start. In the beginning, three to five minutes is a long time to focus and breathe. Later, when you become more accustomed to using this style of breathing, you can also begin using it while you're doing other daily activities, like walking, doing the dishes, watching television, or having a conversation.

When using mindful breathing, many people feel as if they become "one" with their breathing, meaning that they feel a deep connection to the experience. If that happens for you, that's great. If not, that's okay, too. Just keep practicing. Also, some people feel light-headed, stop if you need to, or return your breathing to a normal rate and begin counting your breaths.

This is such a simple and powerful skill that, ideally, you should practice it every day.

### ***Instructions***

*To begin, find a comfortable place to sit in a room where you won't be disturbed for as long as you've set your timer. Turn off any distracting sounds. If you feel comfortable closing your eyes, feel free to close them. If you prefer to keep them open, focus on a spot 3-6 feet in front of you.*

*Take a few slow, long breaths, and relax. Place one hand on your stomach. Now slowly breathe in through your nose and then slowly exhale through your mouth. Feel your stomach rise and fall as you breathe. Imagine your belly filling up with air like a balloon as you breathe in, and then feel it deflate as you breathe out. Feel the breath moving in across your nostrils, and then*

*feel your breath blowing out across your lips. As you breathe, notice the sensations in your body. Feel your lungs fill up with air. Notice the weight of your body resting on whatever you're sitting on. With each breath, notice how your body feels more and more relaxed.*

*Now, as you continue to breathe, begin counting your breaths each time you exhale. Count silently to yourself. Count each exhalation until you reach "4" and then begin counting at "1" again. To begin, breathe in slowly through your nose, and then exhale slowly through your mouth. Count "1." Again, breathe in slowly through your nose and slowly out through your mouth. Count "2." Repeat, breathing in slowly through your nose, and then slowly exhaling. Count "3." Last time—breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Count "4." Now begin counting at "1" again.*

*This time, though, as you continue to count, occasionally shift your focus to how you're breathing. Notice the rising and falling of your chest and stomach as you inhale and exhale. Again, feel the breath moving in through your nose and slowly out through your mouth. If you want to, place one hand on your stomach and feel your breath rise and fall. Continue counting as you take slow, long breaths. Feel your stomach expand like a balloon as you breathe in, and then feel it deflate as you breathe out. Continue to shift your focus back and forth between counting and the physical experience of breathing.*

*Now, lastly, begin to notice any thoughts or other distractions that remove your focus from your breathing. These distractions might be memories, sounds, physical sensations, or emotions. When your mind begins to wander and you catch yourself thinking of something else, return your focus to counting your breath. Or return your focus to the physical sensation of breathing. Try not to criticize yourself for getting distracted. Just keep taking slow, long breaths into your belly, in and out. Imagine filling up your belly with air like a balloon. Feel it rising with each inhalation and falling with each exhalation. Keep counting each breath, and with each exhalation, feel your body relaxing, more and more deeply.*

*Keep breathing until your alarm goes off. Continue counting your breaths, noticing the physical sensation of your breathing and letting go of any distracting thoughts or other stimuli. Then, when your alarm goes off, slowly open your eyes and gently return your focus to the room.*

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8

## Adult Pleasant Events Schedule

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Planning my career
3. Getting out of (paying on) debt
4. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
5. Going on vacation
6. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7. Recycling old items
8. Going on a date
9. Relaxing
10. Going to a movie in the middle of the week
11. Jogging, walking
12. Thinking I have done a full day's work
13. Listening to music
14. Recalling past parties
15. Buying household gadgets
16. Lying in the sun
17. Planning a career change
18. Laughing
19. Thinking about my past trips
20. Listening to others
21. Reading magazines or newspapers
22. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
23. Spending an evening with good friends
24. Planning a day's activities
25. Meeting new people
26. Remembering beautiful scenery
27. Saving money
28. Gambling
29. Going home from work
30. Eating
31. Practicing karate, judo, yoga
32. Thinking about retirement
33. Repairing things around the house
34. Working on my car (bicycle)
35. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
36. Wearing sexy clothes
37. Having quiet evenings
38. Taking care of my plants
39. Buying, selling stock
40. Going swimming
41. Doodling
42. Exercising
43. Collecting old things
44. Going to a party
45. Thinking about buying things
46. Playing golf
47. Playing soccer
48. Flying kites
49. Having discussions with friends
50. Having family get-togethers
51. Riding a motorbike
52. Sex
53. Running track
54. Going camping
55. Singing around the house
56. Arranging flowers
57. Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
58. Losing weight
59. Going to the beach
60. Thinking I'm an OK person
61. A day with nothing to do
62. Having class reunions

## EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8 (cont.)

63. Going skating
64. Going sailboating
65. Traveling abroad or in the United States
66. Painting
67. Doing something spontaneously
68. Doing needlepoint, crewel, etc.
69. Sleeping
70. Driving
71. Entertaining
72. Going to clubs (garden, Parents without Partners, etc.)
73. Thinking about getting married
74. Going hunting
75. Singing with groups
76. Flirting
77. Playing musical instruments
78. Doing arts and crafts
79. Making a gift for someone
80. Buying records
81. Watching boxing, wrestling
82. Planning parties
83. Cooking
84. Going hiking
85. Writing books (poems, articles)
86. Sewing
87. Buying clothes
88. Going out to dinner
89. Working
90. Discussing books
91. Sightseeing
92. Gardening
93. Going to the beauty parlor
94. Early morning coffee and newspaper
95. Playing tennis
96. Kissing
97. Watching my children (play)
98. Thinking I have a lot more going for me than most people
99. Going to plays and concerts
100. Daydreaming
101. Planning to go to school
102. Thinking about sex
103. Going for a drive
104. Listening to a stereo
105. Refinishing furniture
106. Watching TV
107. Making lists of tasks
108. Going bike riding
109. Walks in the woods (or at the waterfront)
110. Buying gifts
111. Traveling to national parks
112. Completing a task
113. Collecting shells
114. Going to a spectator sport (auto racing, horse racing)
115. Eating gooey, fattening foods
116. Teaching
117. Photography
118. Going fishing
119. Thinking about pleasant events
120. Staying on a diet
121. Playing with animals
122. Flying a plane
123. Reading fiction
124. Acting
125. Being alone
126. Writing diary entries or letters
127. Cleaning
128. Reading nonfiction
129. Taking children places

## EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8 (cont.)

130. Dancing
131. Going on a picnic
132. Thinking "I did that pretty well"  
after doing something
133. Meditating
134. Playing volleyball
135. Having lunch with a friend
136. Going to the mountains
137. Thinking about having a family
138. Thoughts about happy moments  
in my childhood
139. Splurging
140. Playing cards
141. Solving riddles mentally
142. Having a political discussion
143. Playing softball
144. Seeing and/or showing photos  
or slides
145. Playing guitar
146. Knitting
147. Doing crossword puzzles
148. Shooting pool
149. Dressing up and looking nice
150. Reflecting on how I've improved
151. Buying things for myself  
(perfume, golf balls, etc.)
152. Talking on the phone
153. Going to museums
154. Thinking religious thoughts
155. Lighting candles
156. Listening to the radio
157. Getting a massage
158. Saying "I love you"
159. Thinking about my good qualities
160. Buying books
161. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
162. Going skiing
163. White-water canoeing
164. Going bowling
165. Doing woodworking
166. Fantasizing about the future
167. Taking ballet, tap dancing
168. Debating
169. Sitting in a sidewalk cafe
170. Having an aquarium
171. Erotica (sex books, movies)
172. Going horseback riding
173. Thinking about becoming active  
in the community
174. Doing something new
175. Making jigsaw puzzles
176. Thinking I'm a person who can cope

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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Note. Adapted from *The Adult Pleasant Events Schedule* by M. M. Linehan, E. Sharp, and A. M. Ivanoff, 1980, November, paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, New York. Adapted by permissions of the authors.