

Symptoms of Vicarious Trauma and Burnout

Behavioral Symptoms

- Sleep Disturbances
- Nightmares
- Appetite changes
- Hypervigilance
- Exaggerated startle response, “jumpiness
- Losing things
- Clumsiness
- Self-harm behaviors
- Negative coping – smoking, drinking, acting out

Physical Symptoms

- Panic symptoms – sweating, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, dizziness
- Aches and pains
- Weakened immune system

Cognitive Symptoms

- Minimization of your vicarious trauma
- Lowered self-esteem and increased self-doubt
- Trouble concentrating
- Confusion/disorientation
- Perfectionism
- Racing thoughts
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Lack of meaning in life
- Thoughts of harming yourself

Emotional Symptoms

- Helplessness and powerlessness
- Numbness

- Oversensitivity
- Emotional Unpredictability
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Sadness and/or depression

Social Symptoms

- Withdrawal and isolation
- Loneliness
- Irritability and intolerance
- Distrust
- Projection of blame and rage
- Decreased interest in intimacy
- Distrust
- Change in parenting style (e.g., becoming overprotective)

What you can do . . .

Monitor yourself

Take care of yourself

Take time for yourself (don't work more than your allotted hours, don't skip breaks)

Separate yourself (This is not my pain. I am just holding it for a little while)

Limit yourself (Maintain proper boundaries with your clients and your workplace)

Help yourself (seek professional help for yourself if you need it)

Be Honest with yourself (check in regularly with yourself to see if your job and role is still satisfying)

Empower yourself (attend professional development and training opportunities)

Renew yourself (find activities and things that help refresh and renew you)

Source: <http://www.wendtcenter.org/resources/for-professionals.html>