



# Coronavirus

## Compassion Fatigue for Caregivers

Compassion fatigue is the emotional, physical and spiritual cost of caring for others who are suffering. If you are in a caregiving role during this pandemic, you may have found yourself feeling overwhelmed. For caregivers, burnout and compassion fatigue can develop after prolonged exposure to the suffering of others or when the perceived demand outweighs one's resources.

### Early warning signs of compassion fatigue:

- Mood changes
- Decreased compassion and empathy
- Mental and physical exhaustion
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs, or food
- Sleep and/or appetite changes
- Loss of enjoyment at home or at work
- Increased interpersonal conflicts
- Low motivation or morale
- Absenteeism or chronic tardiness

**If you find yourself suffering from compassion fatigue, your Employee Assistance Program is here to help.**

### Tips to better manage stress and avoid fatigue:

- Begin setting limits and say “no” when you can.
- Take breaks. Five or 10 minutes here and there throughout the day will help you rejuvenate mentally.
- Change your negative thought pattern. Negative self-talk is the inner dialogue you have with yourself that may be limiting your ability to believe in yourself and reach your potential. Pay attention to these thoughts and think of a positive alternative.
- Don't assume that you must do everything yourself. Seek support from those you trust.
- Spend time with positive and optimistic people and limit your time with those who are negative.
- Take care of yourself physically. For example, take a walk and clear your mind.

Unfortunately, many caregivers follow a common path that leads to burnout and compassion fatigue. Initially, they are motivated, enthusiastic and energetic; ready to serve; and eager to make a difference. Later, they may cut corners, avoid responsibilities and lose concentration. Once they become chronically fatigued, caregivers may start to complain excessively, isolate from others, and begin losing hope and enthusiasm for caregiving all together. To learn more on how to avoid compassion fatigue, reach out to your EAP.

As always, your EAP is here for you and your family. Whether you are staying home or continuing your routine, there are a variety of ways to connect with your EAP including: telephone 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341, online at [EAP4YOU.com](http://EAP4YOU.com), through video, live chat or text message. Reach out to learn more about the many ways you can receive support from your Employee Assistance Program.