



PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

Introduction to the ProQOL Assessment

When you *[help]* people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you *[help]* can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a *[helper]*. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the *last 30 days*.

1=Never	2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Often	5=Very Often
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ProQOL Assessment Questions

1.	I am happy.	
2.	I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].	
3.	I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.	
4.	I feel connected to others.	
5.	I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.	
6.	I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].	
7.	I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].	
8.	I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].	
9.	I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].	
10.	I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].	

ProQOL Assessment Questions (Continued)

11.	Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.	
12.	I like my work as a [helper].	
13.	I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].	
14.	I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].	
15.	I have beliefs that sustain me.	
16.	I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.	
17.	I am the person I always wanted to be.	
18.	My work makes me feel satisfied.	
19.	I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].	
20.	I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.	

ProQOL Assessment Questions (Final Set)

21.	I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.	
22.	I believe I can make a difference through my work.	
23.	I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].	
24.	I am proud of what I can do to [help].	
25.	As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.	
26.	I feel "bogged down" by the system.	
27.	I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].	
28.	I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.	
29.	I am a very caring person.	
30.	I am happy that I chose to do this work.	

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Scoring Your ProQOL Assessment

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

Scoring Instructions:

- 1. Be certain you respond to all items.
- 2. Go to items 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29 and reverse your score. For example, if you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. We ask you to reverse these scores because we have learned that the test works better if you reverse these scores.

You Wrote	Change to
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

Compassion Satisfaction Score

Add your scores on questions 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions was	So My Score Equals	My Level of Compassion Satisfaction
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Burnout Score

Add your scores questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 29. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Burnout questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Burnout
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Secondary Traumatic Stress Score

Add your scores on questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Secondary Traumatic Stress questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Secondary Traumatic Stress
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Understanding Your Compassion Satisfaction Score

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, your personal scores are below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

Burnout_____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a "bad day" or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

Understanding Your Secondary Traumatic Stress Score

Secondary Traumatic Stress_____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your workrelated, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, due to your work as a soldier or civilian working in military medicine personnel, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, such as providing care to casualties or for those in a military medical rehabilitation facility, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

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Recommended Strategies Based on Score Range

Once you've calculated your scores for Compassion Satisfaction and Secondary Traumatic Stress, you can use the following strategies to maintain or improve your professional quality of life. These recommendations are tailored to different score ranges and focus on practical approaches that can be implemented in both personal and professional settings.

For Low Compassion Satisfaction Scores (Below 43)

- Seek professional development opportunities that reconnect you with meaningful aspects of your work
- Establish a regular practice of documenting positive outcomes and interactions
- Consider mentorship or peer support groups to share experiences
- Explore work adjustments that might better align with your values and strengths
- Engage in reflective practice to identify sources of fulfillment in your work

For Average Compassion Satisfaction Scores (43-57)

- Maintain awareness of what aspects of your work provide satisfaction
- Develop routines that protect and enhance these positive elements
- Practice gratitude exercises related to your professional contributions
- Balance challenging cases with ones that offer more immediate satisfaction
- Continue professional education to expand your effectiveness

For High Compassion Satisfaction Scores (Above 57)

- Share your positive experiences and approaches with colleagues
- Consider mentoring others in your field
- Monitor for signs of overcommitment that might lead to burnout
- Maintain your self-care practices that support your professional satisfaction
- Build on your strengths while continuing to address any areas of stress

For High Secondary Traumatic Stress Scores (Above 57)

- Consider seeking professional support from a counselor familiar with trauma exposure
- Implement stronger boundaries between work and personal life
- Develop a trauma-informed self-care plan with specific strategies for acute stress
- Discuss workload and case distribution adjustments with supervisors
- Practice grounding techniques and mindfulness exercises daily

For Average Secondary Traumatic Stress Scores (43-57)

- Establish regular debriefing routines after difficult cases
- Maintain consistent self-care practices that focus on stress reduction
- Monitor your emotional responses to clients' traumatic material
- Build a support network of colleagues who understand your work challenges
- Practice compartmentalization techniques for work-related stress

For Low Secondary Traumatic Stress Scores (Below 43)

- Continue effective coping strategies that have worked well for you
- Remain vigilant about changes in your stress responses to clients' trauma
- Share effective practices with colleagues while respecting privacy
- Maintain awareness of the potential for cumulative stress effects
- Regularly reassess your professional quality of life

Remember that professional quality of life exists on a continuum and can change over time. Regular assessment using the ProQOL can help you monitor your well-being and implement appropriate strategies proactively. If you experience persistent distress, consult with a healthcare professional for additional support.

References

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