



Surviving Compassion Fatigue

A Metaphor for Practicing Resilience

For Human Service Providers & Caregivers



Scuba divers use oxygen tanks to help them survive in the sea. They must carefully check the equipment before their expeditions, consistently monitor the remaining oxygen levels, and take action to get themselves to safety before they run out of the air they need to survive.

And, crucially, scuba divers use the buddy system (accountability partners). They do not dive alone. They know that we need each other.

While exposing ourselves to secondary and vicarious trauma, we need to stay mindful of the extent to which our oxygen is being sapped. Being aware of what are our bodies, hearts and spirit are telling us in the moment.

Questions to ask ourselves

- When I am nearly out of reserves I need to act. I cannot continue to be an effective helper to others if I have nothing left in my tank. Am I checking my reserves soon enough?
- Do I have enough in my tank to get myself to safety? When I emerge from the depths, what do I need to refill my tank?

REFERENCES

Beverly Kyer, The Kyer Group Corporation, www.BeverlyKyer.com

Adapted from "What Sustains Your Breath?" by Trudi Frazel (UU World, Summer 2018, page 40-41)

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