

5 COMMON HELPER CHALLENGES FACT SHEETS

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



SPIRITUAL FIRST AID™

Spiritual First Aid
Wheaton, Illinois
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OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Occupational burnout in helpers is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress in caregiving or support roles. It leads to reduced performance, depersonalization, and a sense of helplessness or detachment from the work.

Behavioral changes, such as increased isolation or withdrawal

Unfulfillment and lack of satisfaction from work

Reduced productivity or difficulty concentrating

Negative attitude and cynicism towards work

Overwhelming exhaustion and fatigue

Unexplained physical symptoms (e.g., headaches)

Time pressure and deadlines leading to stress and anxiety

CHRONIC STRESS

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Chronic stress in helpers is a prolonged state of emotional and physical strain resulting from constant exposure to high-stress situations, often in caregiving or support roles.

Sleeplessness and insomnia disrupting rest

Tension and muscle pain due to chronic strain

Reduced ability to focus and concentrate

Emotional instability, such as irritability or sadness

Social withdrawal and isolation from others

Strained relationships with friends, family, or colleagues

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Vicarious trauma is the emotional and psychological impact experienced by professionals who repeatedly engage with others' traumatic stories and experiences. This indirect exposure to trauma can lead to significant changes in perception, heightened anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of helplessness. Over time, it can lead to symptoms similar to those of direct trauma exposure.

Vivid and intrusive memories or images related to traumatic events

Increased emotional sensitivity or reactivity

Changes in worldview or beliefs about safety and trust

Avoidance of triggering situations, people, memories or emotions

Recurring negative thoughts or feelings related to the trauma

Intrusive and distressing thoughts about the trauma

Overwhelming emotional reactions or numbness and detachment

Unexplained physical symptoms, such as stomach problems

Sleep disturbances or nightmares

COMPASSION FATIGUE

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Compassion fatigue is the emotional and physical exhaustion that caregivers and helping professionals experience due to the chronic stress of providing care and empathy to those suffering from trauma or distress. Over time, compassion fatigue can impact both professional and personal relationships.

Chronic exhaustion or fatigue

Overwhelming emotional burden

Mood swings, irritability, or anger

Physical symptoms such as headaches or muscle tension

Avoidance of people or situations related to work

Sleep disturbances or insomnia

Substance abuse or other unhealthy coping mechanisms

Increased cynicism or negativity

Onset of depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues

Neglect of self-care or personal relationships

MORAL INJURY

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Moral injury is the emotional and psychological distress that occurs when an individual's actions, or the actions of others, violate deeply held moral or ethical beliefs. This violation leads to profound feelings of guilt, shame, and betrayal, and can result in long-lasting emotional and mental health issues. Moral injury often arises in high-stakes environments such as military combat, healthcare, and emergency services, where individuals may witness or partake in actions that conflict with their core values.

Moral distress from actions that conflict with ethical values

Overwhelming guilt and shame over perceived wrongdoings

Regret and remorse for actions taken or not taken

Alienation and isolation from others due to internal conflict

Loss of trust in self, others, and possibly spiritual beliefs



Spiritual First Aid

Mental health is complex. Helping doesn't have to be.

BIBLICALLY-INFORMED.

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