

# LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

*Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice*

## FAMILY EMPOWERMENT TIPS: COMPASSION FATIGUE

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Compassion fatigue is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion that can occur when caregivers consistently provide supportive care to others. Compassion fatigue is common for families with loved ones in nursing homes. As care partners, you play an important role in supporting your family member or loved one while navigating the emotional demands of the caregiving journey. Below are tips to help you recognize and cope with compassion fatigue.

### ❑ Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- **Emotional Exhaustion:** Pay attention to feelings of sadness, frustration, or numbness.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Look out for fatigue, headaches, or changes in appetite and sleep patterns.
- **Reduced Empathy:** If you find it hard to connect with friends and family, it may be a sign of compassion fatigue.

### ❑ Strategies for Coping

- **Self-Care:** Prioritize your well-being by adding self-care activities to your routine. Self-care activities could include exercise, hobbies, music, or whatever you find relaxing.
- **Set Realistic Expectations:** You can't do *everything*...it's okay to ask for help!
- **Establish a Support System:** Reach out to friends, family, or support groups, such as your family council! Sharing your experiences can provide relief.
- **Educate Yourself:** Knowledge empowers you to make informed decisions about your loved one's care.

Caring for a loved one in a nursing home can be emotionally demanding, but recognizing and addressing compassion fatigue is essential for maintaining your well-being. By implementing these strategies and seeking support when needed, you can enhance your ability to provide the best possible care for your family member while ensuring your own resilience and mental health.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Visit [nursinghome411.org/families](https://nursinghome411.org/families) or contact us at [families@ltccc.org](mailto:families@ltccc.org) to learn about family councils and family empowerment.
- [LTCCC's Family Empowerment Program on Compassion Fatigue](#)
- [TEDx Talk: Compassion Fatigue: What is it and do you have it?](#)
- [Signs and Consequences of Compassion Fatigue](#)