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# Practicing What We Preach: Creating Balance in Clinical Work

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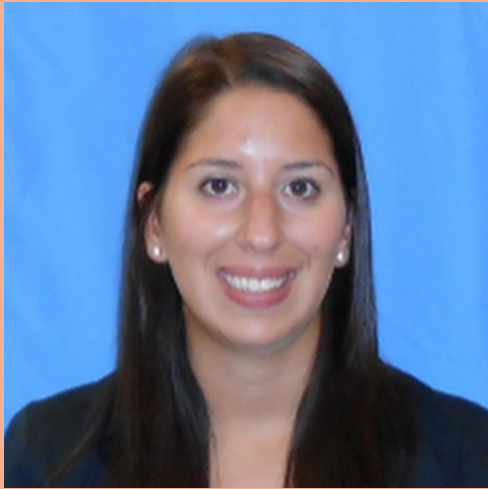
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# Sarah Biniasz

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**How full is your cup, really?**

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**Stand where you land**

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**Good clinicians go above and  
beyond, even at personal  
cost.**

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**Setting boundaries feels  
ethically uncomfortable.**

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**Burnout is mostly an  
individual responsibility.**

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**Balance looks the same  
across cultures.**

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# Debrief

**What did you notice in your body?**

**How did cultural or professional training  
influence your decision?**

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# What is burnout?

“A process of physical and emotional exhaustion, fatigue, detachment, and self-doubt that people who work in caring and supporting roles can experience” (Vivolo et al., 2022).

## Five common physical symptom:

**Chronic fatigue** – feeling physically exhausted even after rest or time off.

**Headaches or muscle tension** – particularly in the neck, shoulders, or back due to prolonged stress.

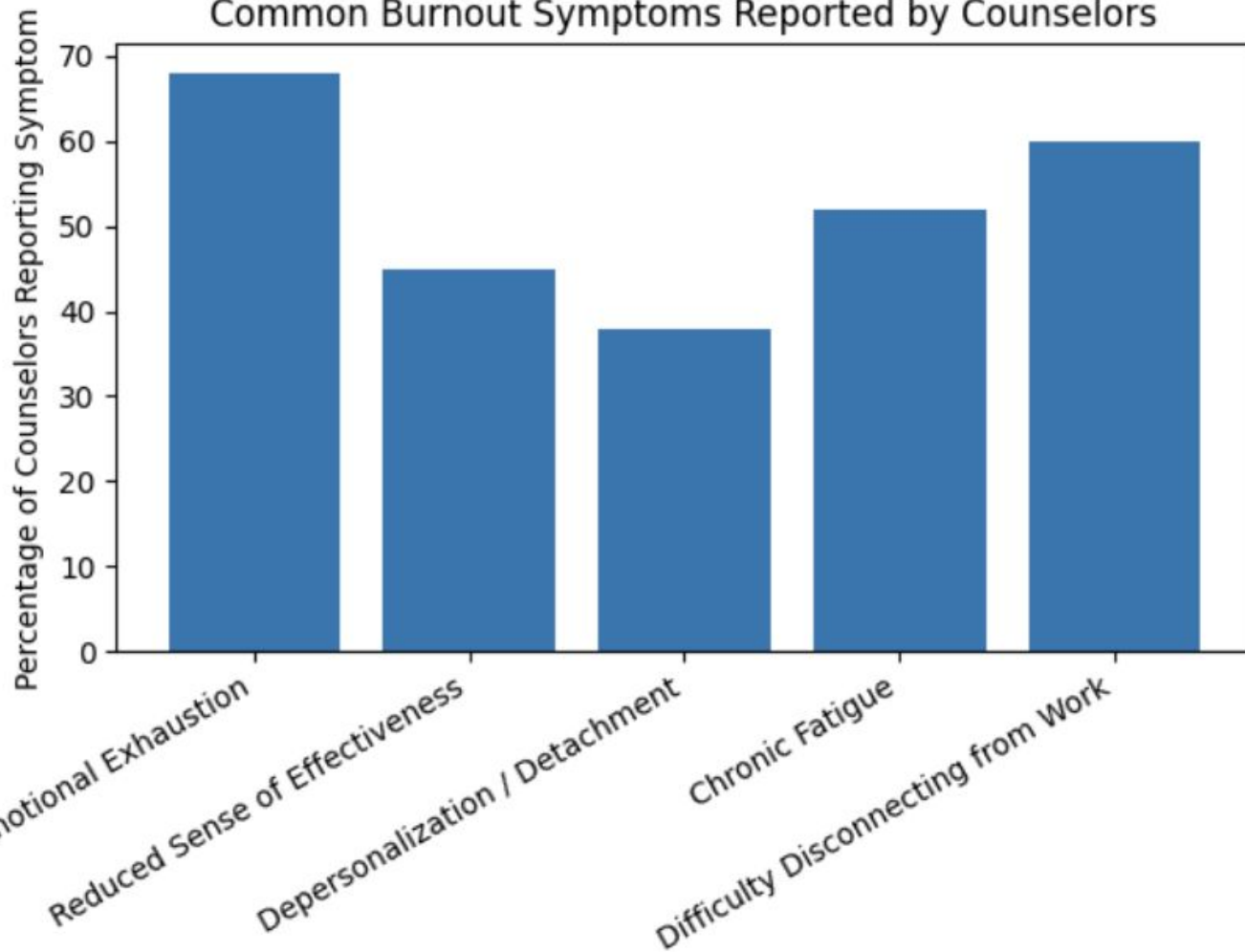
**Sleep disturbances** – difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up feeling unrested.

**Frequent illness** – weakened immune system leading to more colds, infections, or general sickness.

**Gastrointestinal issues** – stomach aches, nausea, or digestive problems related to ongoing stress.

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### Common Burnout Symptoms Reported by Counselors



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**Burnout is NOT a personal  
failure**

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# Individual vs System Sorting

Is it individual, systemic, or both?

- Caseload size
  - Productivity demands
  - Emotional labor
  - After-hours communication
  - Cultural expectations of caretaking
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**If the cause is systemic, the solution cannot  
be only personal.**

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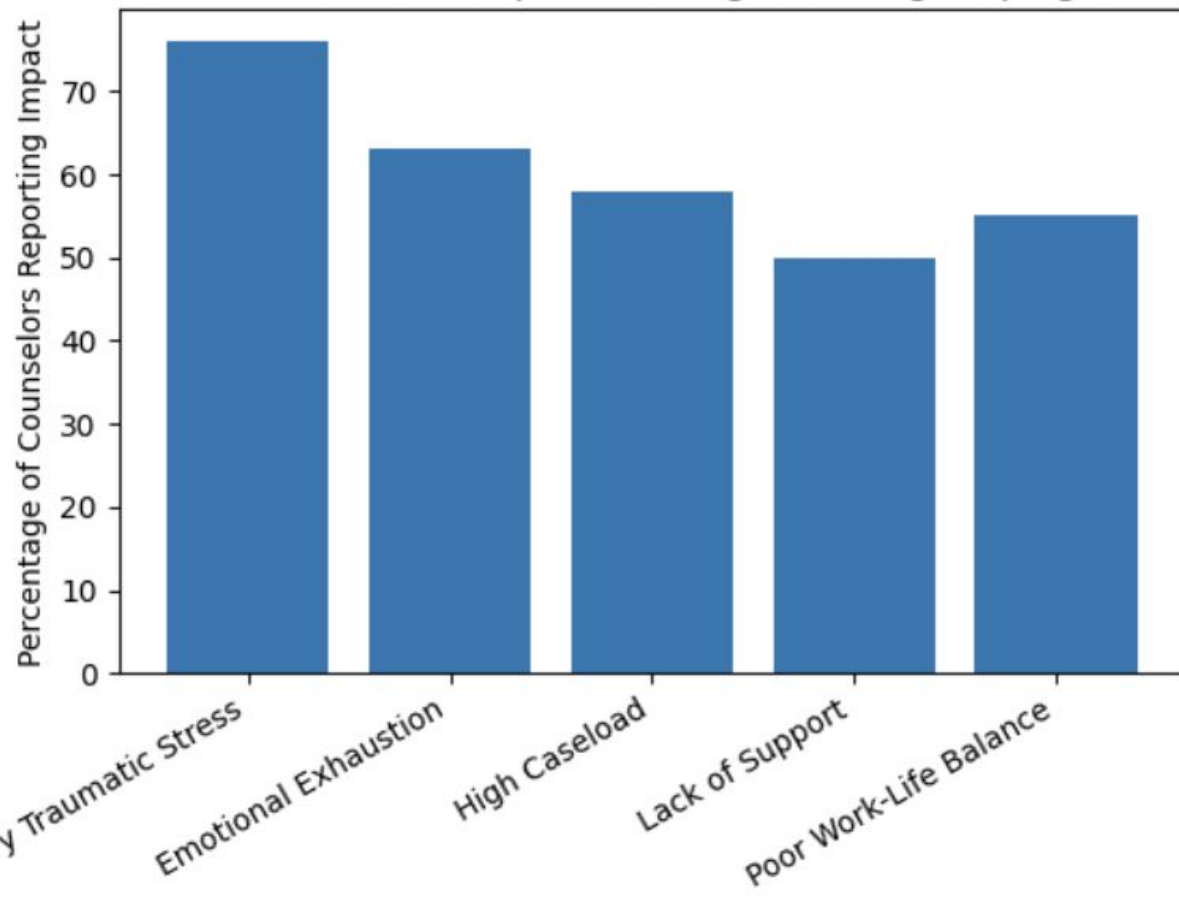
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# Compassion Fatigue

- Emotional and physical exhaustion from prolonged exposure to others' suffering
  - Feeling emotional drained after sessions
  - Difficulty maintaining empathy with clients
    - Irritability or frustration
  - Intrusive thoughts about client stories
  - Feeling overwhelmed by the pain of others



## Common Contributors to Compassion Fatigue Among Helping Professionals



# Burnout vs Compassion Fatigue



## Burnout



Gradual onset



Workload / system driven



Cynicism and detachment



Primarily a work-related challenge



## Compassion Fatigue



Can be more acute



Trauma-exposure related



Emotional depletion from holding others' pain



Connected to empathic engagement

Both can impact therapists' wellbeing — but they have different roots and require different supports.



Which signs do you tend to notice first in yourself or colleagues?

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# The Helper Identity

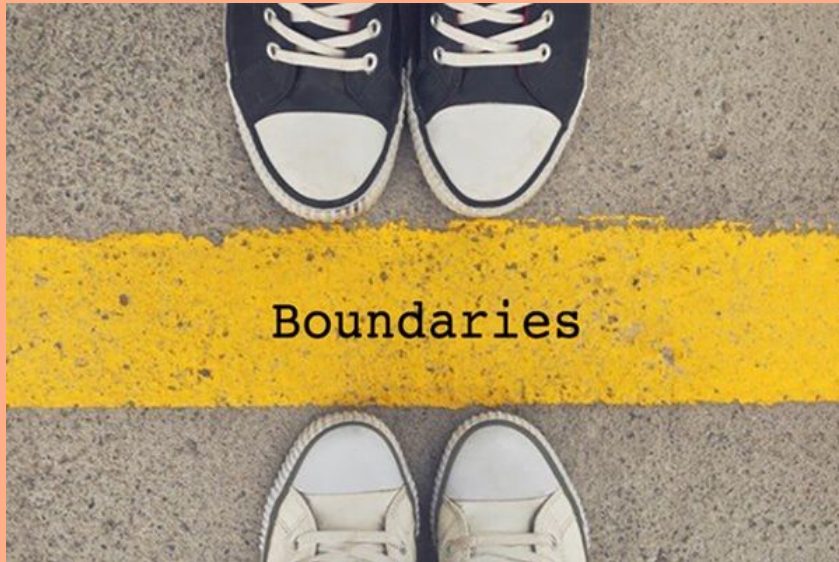


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# Who we are as clinicians?

- Identity development over the lifespan
  - Early-Career vs. Seasoned Provider Pressures
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# Boundary Practice Lab



- **Time**
- **Emotional availability**
- **Communication**
- **Caseload/role clarity**

# Values-to-Action Integration

The image features four glowing lightbulbs arranged in a row against a dark background. The lightbulbs are illuminated from within, creating a warm, golden glow. The two lightbulbs on the far left and far right are the largest and most prominent. The leftmost lightbulb has the word "FINAL" written inside it in a white, hand-drawn, sans-serif font. The rightmost lightbulb has the word "THOUGHTS" written inside it in the same style. The two lightbulbs in the middle are smaller and less prominent. The overall composition is symmetrical and visually appealing, suggesting a theme of ideas, thoughts, or a final conclusion.

FINAL

THOUGHTS

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# References

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