

FOCUS | Healing Emotional Exhaustion (30-60 minutes)



OBJECTIVE |

Explore **emotional exhaustion**, the stressors that contribute to it, and how to heal and protect against it.

OVERVIEW |

Emotional exhaustion is a **sustained** feeling of emotional and mental depletion that results when chronic **emotional demands exceed one's capacity to recover**. It is a result of prolonged emotional labor/ stress without relief or adequate time to recover.

- Sounds Like - *"I don't care."*
- Feels Like - *Apathy, depletion, "used up"*
- Looks Like - *emotional detachment or numbness, irritability, distancing from others*

*See **MODULE 6 | The Gentle Power of the Wounded Healer** for more information about emotional labor/exhaustion.

HEALING |

We heal and protect against emotional exhaustion through **less emotional strain** and **more recovery**. We heal through **recalibration, repair, and relief**.

- REST - **recalibrate** the nervous system

OPENING | Grounding the Circle (10-15 minutes)

1. Come into Circle (Introductions) (2-3 minutes)

Invite a quick round

Prompt:

- Name
- One word (or short phrase) for how you're arriving today

2. Share Circle Focus & Objectives (2 minutes)

Today we're focusing on emotional exhaustion—a state that many of us experience, often quietly. Emotional exhaustion happens when the emotional demands we carry over time exceed our capacity to recover. It's not just about being tired—it's about feeling used up. It can:

- Sound like: *"I don't care."*
- Feel like: *apathy, depletion, heaviness*
- Look like: *irritability, disconnection, or emotional numbness*

This is not a personal failure. It's often a signal that too much has been carried for too long without enough restoration.

3. Review Core Values & Core Commitments (1-2minutes)

- Briefly walk through the Core Values and Core Commitments

Prompt: (no need to share aloud)

- What value helps ground you in your work?

Quick Reflection (1-2 minutes):

Invite participants to quietly consider:

- Where do you notice this showing up for you right now?

Somatic Practices (5 minutes)

To recalibrate the nervous system and release stored physical and emotional stress (See Guide Resource Portal for modeled practices in the REST Resources page)

Release + Restore

Invite awareness:

- What shifts in your body when you give yourself even a moment to reset?



REST

Regulate Nervous System

Gather in circle, check-in, engage simple somatic (body) movement practices designed to soothe the nervous system, alleviate tension, and create community connection.



GUIDE RESOURCES PORTAL | <https://www.drjencifden.com/sppsguidetraining>

© 2026 THE LIGHT YOU CAST CURRICULUM BY DR. JEN CLIFDEN | PLEASE DO NOT REPRODUCE WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT

FOCUS | Healing Emotional Exhaustion

HEALING |

We heal and protect against emotional exhaustion through **less emotional strain** and **more recovery**.

We heal through **recalibration, repair, and relief**.



- RESTORATION - **repair** by restoring meaning and purpose in moments that require emotional labor
- REVITALIZATION - create boundaries that provide **relief** from chronic emotional labor

TRANSITION | Rose, Thorn, Bud + H.E.A.L. (15-30 minutes)

Set-Up and Framing

This activity is an opportunity to name what is sustaining you and what is draining you, and to move toward responses that are more aligned, sustainable, and rooted in your values.

ROSE | What's Nourishing You

Prompt:

- What is a highlight or "glimmer" in your life right now that allows you to express your core value in your work or personal life?

Pair Share (3-5 minutes)

THORN | What's Draining You

Prompt:

- When do you notice yourself carrying emotional residue from others?

Pair or Whole Circle Share (3-5 minutes)

H.E.A.L. | Repair + Re-Align (8-12 minutes)

Guided Reflection + Pair Share

H | Honor the Trigger (2-3 minutes)

- How might this situation invite you to shift from "How much can I give?" to "What can I give without depletion?"

E | Embody the Breath (2-3 minutes)

- How do you want to feel in your body in this situation so you can stay rooted in your core value?

A | Align Thoughts and Emotions with Values (2-3 minutes)

- What new thought, belief, or perspective becomes possible from this place?

L | Lean toward Love (2-3 minutes)

- What is one small, value-aligned action you can take that honors both your purpose and your limits?

RESTORATION
Process & Make Meaning

Discuss a foundational concept of the core curriculum, share personal experiences, and engage our signature HEAL strategy to create meaning, gain insight, and generate wisdom.

E | Embody the Breath

"I am safe. I am relaxed.
I am in control."

L | Lean Toward Love

"My calm, compassionate
presence is potent and
positively influential."

H | Honor the Trigger

"I am experiencing a
stressor/trigger.
This is an opportunity/
challenge, not a threat."

A | Align Thoughts and Emotions

"I can re-frame this
situation from a
perspective of curiosity
and compassion."



FOCUS | Healing Emotional Exhaustion



HEALING |

We heal and protect against emotional exhaustion through **less emotional strain** and **more recovery**. We heal through **recalibration, repair, and relief**.

- RESTORATION - **repair** by restoring meaning and purpose in moments that require emotional labor

BOUNDARIES |

Boundaries are not walls; they are energy management tools.

To heal and prevent emotional exhaustion, we must remember:

- Boundaries are necessary
- Our capacity is finite
- Rest from emotional labor is not a reward; it is a requirement in relationship-based work

CLOSURE | Bud Reflection (5-10 minutes)

1. Frame (2-4 minutes)

- Creating boundaries that protect against emotional exhaustion is not about caring less or becoming rigid—it's about aligning your emotional output with your actual capacity.

Common energy leaks can include:

- Absorbing others' emotions
- Being too available without limits
- Over-caretaking
- Taking responsibility for what you don't control
- Over-functioning emotionally

Protective boundaries might look like:

- Pausing before responding
- Listening without fixing
- Caring without absorbing
- Allowing others to experience their feelings without rescuing

2. Individual Bud Prompt Reflection (1-2 minutes)

Bud Prompt:

- What is one predictable emotional energy leak for you, and what is one boundary you can practice the next time it shows up?

3. Whole Group Close (2-4 minutes)

Go around the circle and invite participants to share a takeaway or intention.

- What is one boundary you want to carry forward this week?



REVITALIZATION

Renew Energy & Reinforce Boundaries

Close the circle by sharing **boundary setting practices** that protect against chronic stress fatigue and nurture mental health and well-being.

