

FOCUS | Emotional Exhaustion



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*

Emotional exhaustion is common in professions that center on care, regulation, and constant responsiveness to others' needs and is a primary manifestation of burnout.

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



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.

OPENING

- Prepare circle space (arrange center items; display values/commitments handouts)
- Come into circle - introductions
- Share circle focus, objective, overview, and healing practice
- Review the Core Values and Core Commitments.

- Have each individual choose (1) CORE VALUE that grounds them and they resonate with. Share in circle.
 - (Have participants remember their value because it will be used during the HEAL practice.)

- Engage your chosen RECALIBRATION somatic practice(s) that guide the nervous system out of an over or under-active state and into flow, safety, and relaxation.

SUGGESTED SOMATIC PRACTICES

for recalibrating the nervous system so to release stored/stuck physical and emotional stress. (*See Guide Resource Portal below to watch Kathy model these in the REST Resources page)

- Release and Restore -
- Breathe and Tap -



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

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TRANSITION PROMPT

Rose, Thorn, Bud Activity: ROSE

- Ask individuals to share their response to this prompt -- "What is something that is a highlight or a 'glimmer' that is going well for you that allows you the opportunity to express your CORE VALUE in your work or personal life?"

THORN

- Share the focus of the lesson-- emotional exhaustion.
- Invite individuals to consider a current situation or common scenario where they feel that their "emotional battery" that fuels patience, empathy, and Presence is drained faster than it can be recharged.
- Go around the circle and invite individuals to share their stressor/scenario.
- After everyone has shared, ask individuals to consider the ways emotional exhaustion impedes their ability to embody their core value. (If you feel there is time to share, invite a couple responses).

H.E.A.L and repair

- Briefly share/overview the H.E.A.L process.
- Guide the group through the HEAL Model through a collective conversation about these prompts:

H | "How could this situation mark a shift from pushing your limits to clarifying what you can give without draining yourself?" For example, shifting the perspective from "How much can I give?" to "What can I give **WITHOUT** depletion?"

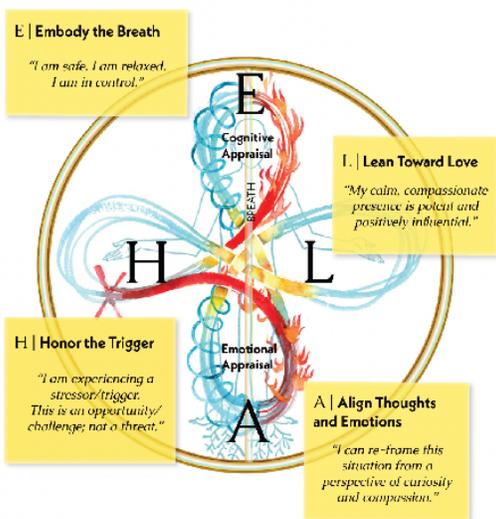
E | "The next time you find yourself in this stressor, how do you want to feel in your body so that you are best able to stay rooted in your core value?"

A | "As you consider your core value and the re-frame 'What can I give without depletion in moments like these,' what new thoughts and feelings become thinkable?"

L | "What is one possible value-based action you can take the stressor/scenario that will allow you to express your core purpose when it comes to emotionally important situations without fully or chronically depleting your energy?"

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.



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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 PROMPT

Rose, Thorn, Bud Activity: Bud

Creating boundaries that protect against emotional exhaustion is not about caring less or becoming rigid. It is about aligning your emotional OUTPUT with your actual CAPACITY.

Here are common energy leaks that contribute to emotional exhaustion:

- Absorbing other's energy
- Being too available without limits (people having unlimited access to you)
- Over care-taking
- Taking responsibility for outcomes you don't control
- Over-functioning (emotionally)

Here are common boundary ideas to consider:

- Not responding immediately other's emotional demands or requests
- Listening **without fixing**
- Caring **without absorbing**
- Letting other's experience their feelings **without rescuing**

BUD

"What is one predictable emotional energy leak for you, and what is one protective boundary you will have the opportunity to enact the next time your emotional stressor occurs?"



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.

