

Vicarious Trauma Self-Screen

A practical self-awareness tool for regulatory professionals
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Instructions: Rate each item for the **past 2–4 weeks**. This is a personal reflection tool only — not a diagnostic or clinical instrument.

0 = Not at all		1 = Occasionally		2 = Frequently		3 = Almost always			
1. I have trouble leaving work thoughts or case details behind at the end of the day.						0	1	2	3
2. I feel more cynical, irritable, or emotionally numb than usual.						0	1	2	3
3. I find myself avoiding certain cases, colleagues, or topics.						0	1	2	3
4. I have physical symptoms (sleep disruption, tension, headaches, fatigue) that I link to work.						0	1	2	3
5. I notice reduced empathy or increased judgment toward licensees or parties.						0	1	2	3
6. I have intrusive thoughts or images related to cases outside of work hours.						0	1	2	3
7. I feel less effective or less satisfied in my professional role.						0	1	2	3
8. I have withdrawn from colleagues, friends, or usual supports.						0	1	2	3
9. I notice changes in my worldview (increased distrust, pessimism, or hypervigilance).						0	1	2	3
10. I have used alcohol, food, work, or other behaviors to cope with work stress more than usual.						0	1	2	3

Scoring Interpretation Guide (Total of 10 items)

0–7 Low current impact

What it suggests: Your current secondary exposure appears manageable. Continue protective practices that support recovery and perspective.

Suggested next step: Maintain regular self-care and stay alert to early signs of drift.

8–15 Moderate impact

What it suggests: Secondary trauma and allostatic load are likely affecting energy, mood, or perspective. This is common in high-exposure regulatory work and is worth addressing intentionally.

Suggested next step: Increase recovery practices such as breathing techniques, mindfulness, exercise, hobbies, and positive social interaction. Consider structured debrief, peer consultation, or supervision. Review recent caseload intensity.

16+ Elevated impact

What it suggests: Significant secondary trauma load is present. Judgment, empathy, boundaries, or personal well-being may be under strain. Early action protects both you and the integrity of your work.

Suggested next step: Prioritize support. Speak with a trusted colleague, supervisor, or qualified professional. Intensify recovery practices (breathing techniques, mindfulness, exercise, hobbies, social connection) and explore available workplace resources such as peer support, EAP, or case-mix discussion with a supervisor.

Important: This is a practical self-awareness tool, not a validated diagnostic or clinical instrument. Constructs are informed by the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (Bride et al., 2004) and the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL; Stamm, 2010). For formal measurement, those validated instruments are recommended.