

# Beyond Compassion Fatigue: What it is, recognizing it, and the path to wholeness and healing

Patricia Marquez-Singh

**Gilroy Unhoused  
Service  
Provider Network  
November 19, 2025**



Charles Figley,  
*Compassion  
Fatigue: Coping  
with Secondary  
Traumatic Stress  
Disorder in Those  
Who Treat the  
Traumatized*

- Professionals who listen to clients' stories of fear, pain, and suffering may feel similar fear, pain, and suffering because they care. Sometimes we feel we are losing our sense of self to the clients we serve...Those who have enormous capacity for feeling and expressing empathy tend to be more at risk of compassion stress.

# Causes

- *Overwhelming and prolonged sensations of compassion and empathy*
- *Prolonged exposure to trauma*
- *High empathy*
- *Organizational issues and workload*
- *Lack of support*
- *Personal history*

# Trauma

**Secondary Trauma:** emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another

**Vicarious Trauma:** cumulative; builds up over time

**Compassion Fatigue:** a process where you feel for another person(s) in such a way that you begin to feel tired, usually starts with empathy and compassion and eventually begins to affect your health

# Signs and Symptoms

- Helplessness or Hopelessness
  - Emotional Exhaustion
  - Detachment or Disconnection
  - Powerlessness or Loss of purpose
- Decreased:
- Endurance and Energy
  - Caring ability
  - Concentration
  - Productivity or effectiveness

Nicole  
Steward,  
*Radical Self-Care  
For Helpers,  
Healers, and  
Changemakers*

## *Reality Check*

Being honest about the conditions of our work

## Responsible vs. Response-able

**Responsible** is answerable for an act performed.

**Response-able** asks are you **ABLE** to respond to things for which you are responsible for with integrity, respect, and intention.

The  
Importance of  
Healthy  
Boundaries

---

**Boundaries serve two main functions:**

---

They tell others how you want to be treated

---

Create healthy separation, both physical and emotional

# The Importance of Healthy Boundaries

- Making clear what is okay and what is not okay
- Being explicit

## Balance vs. Harmony

**Balance** is a state in which we have the right amount of everything we need to lead to harmony and joy, mental steadiness or emotional stability.

**Harmony** is about cultivating nimbleness and expecting our level of focus and attention will vary from time to time. *Feeling of wholeness*

Patricia  
Marquez-  
Singh,  
*Healing is for  
ALL, A collection  
of poetry,  
marking the path  
to healing the  
heart*



# The Path to Wholeness and Healing

- Radical self-care is the shift we need to produce real change. It is a way of being, a fundamental way of showing up in our work... allows us to stand in our power as passionate professionals and reclaim our work as helpers, healers, and changemakers.

Nicole Steward, *Radical Self-Care*

## Being Anxiety Aware

- Naming our fears and concerns
- Anxiety as a reality not a lifestyle

# Radical Self-Care

- *Reality Check*
- *Remember and Reconnect*
- *Regulate and Rebalance*
- *Rituals and Rhythm*
- *Rest and Restore*
- *Reclaim and Replenish*

*Nicole Steward, Radical Self-Care*

## Paying Attention to Your Own Needs

- Check in with yourself regularly
- Basic Needs: Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise

# Questions to Consider

- Am I spreading myself too thin?
- Do the demands of my job, whether assigned or self-imposed, impact my well-being?
- Is what I am doing aligned with who I am and my core values?

## *Ways to Cultivate Self-Compassion*



SPEAK KINDLY  
TO YOURSELF



ASK YOURSELF  
WHAT YOU NEED



VALIDATE  
YOUR PAIN



WRITE A SELF-  
COMPASSIONATE  
LETTER



REMEMBER  
YOU AREN'T  
ALONE



TREAT YOURSELF  
LIKE YOU WOULD  
TREAT A FRIEND

[www.self-compassion.org](http://www.self-compassion.org)

# Practicing a Life of Gratitude

- Beyond an 'attitude of gratitude'
- Gratitude as an action word
- Connection between joy and gratitude

## Do Things That Make You Feel Good

- Ingredients for joy and meaning
- Special treats
- Make a list of the work that inspires you

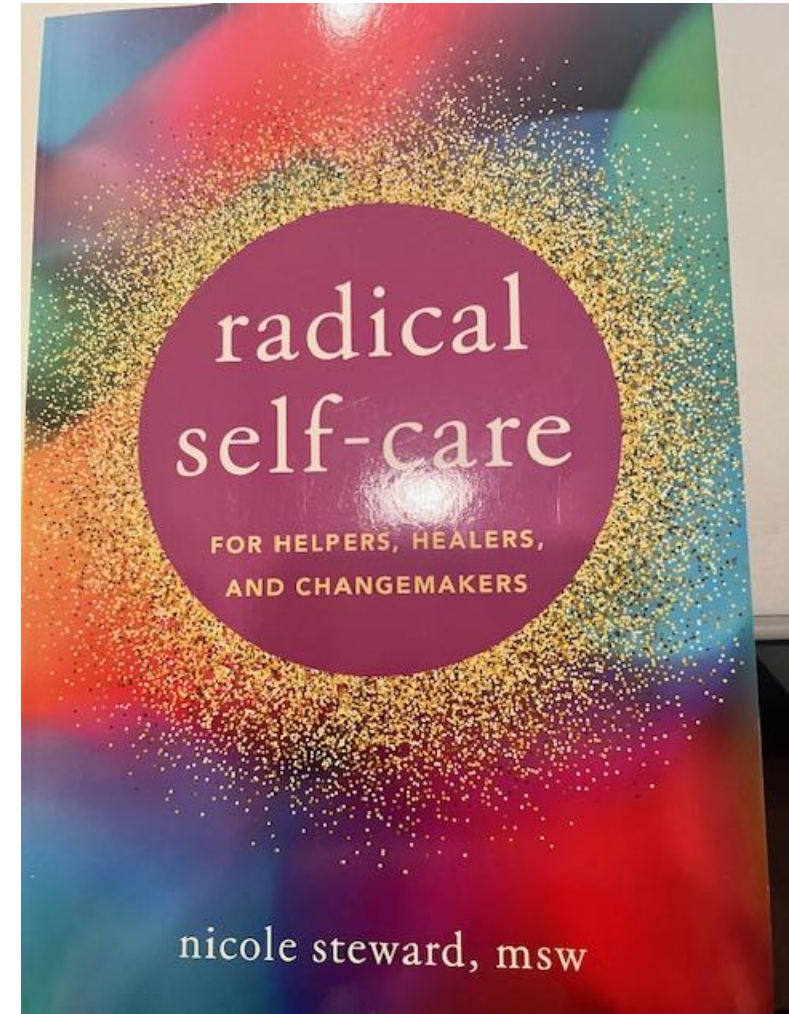
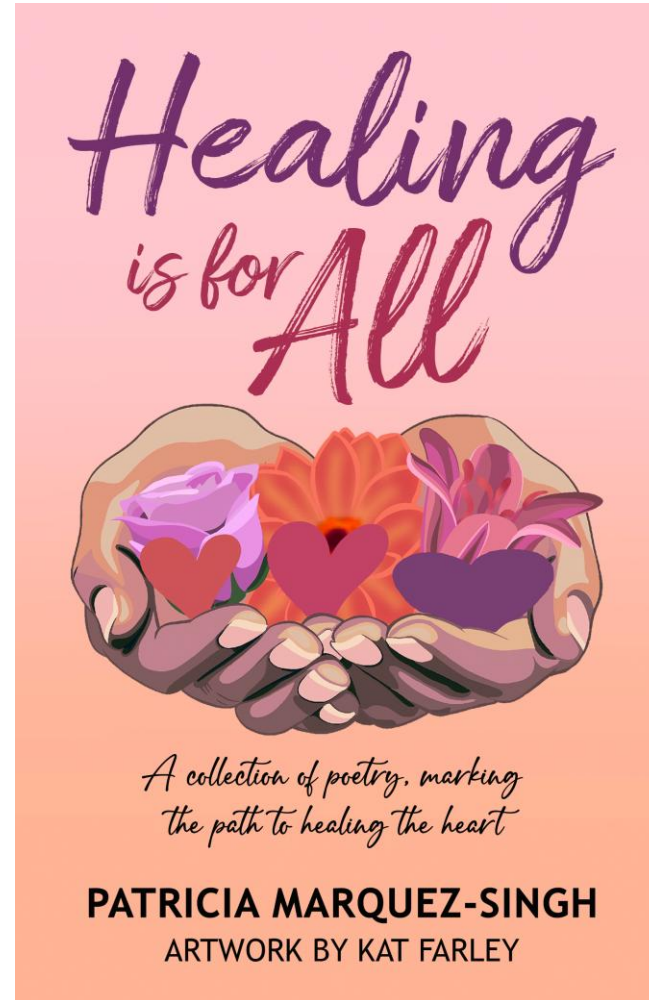
# Questions to Consider

- What do you love?
- What brings meaning to you?
- What is your calling, purpose?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?

## Connecting with Yourself

- Connect with your surroundings
- Schedule downtime
- Journaling

# Resources for healing and wholeness



## *A Healing Pause*

*I know you feel as if you must keep going  
Even as you are depleted of energy, time, sleep, resources, and joy  
But that is not the way for you  
You were meant to take a healing pause, to take a step back from  
the mess  
To take the time you need to reflect, to breathe, and to just BE  
And once you do you can keep moving to the rhythm of your own  
life  
A new life*

*- Patricia Marquez-Singh, Healing is for ALL*



Thank you!  
Gracias

Questions

- **Patricia Marquez-Singh**

Holistic Educator, Restorative Practitioner, Circle Keeper, Author  
and Poet

[forwardjoyps@gmail.com](mailto:forwardjoyps@gmail.com)

(831) 801 6683

Instagram: @patriciaforwardjoy