



## Somatic Inventory of Emotional Overload

Working closely with trauma and stress clients, burnout is closely related. Burnout is usually defined as a condition when individual who works with the client/user becomes emotionally and physically exhausted due to the task performing.

This activity lets you evaluate emotional overload level from inside-out.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Submodules</b>	<b>Group size</b>	<b>Duration</b>
• Self care	• Boundaries	• Individual • Small group	• 20 - 30 min

### Keywords

emotional overload, self-care, burnout, body work

### Aims

- to recognize the signs of exhaustion
- to gain insight into possible burnout in volunteering
- to identify internal emotional barriers for working with clients (refugees)
- to strengthen resilience

### Participants

Volunteers, helpers, non-professionals working with different vulnerable groups

### Description

1. Take a look at the list of symptoms in handouts. Check off the symptoms that apply to you.
2. When you finished with indicators from the list, sit or lay down. Tune into your body, take a moment to slow down. Feel your breath.
3. Visualize one situation from the list. You can call up a client that is draining or a session where you felt disconnected or impatient. What comes up?
4. Now, tune into your body. Can you feel your body? What exactly do you sense in your body?
5. Notice the source of agitation on a physical level. Let go of the story or the reason. Just focus on the body. Where is the location of agitation in the body right now?
6. Make a quick body drawing to indicate where this agitation is located.

7. Now imagine what the agitation is and what your body needs right now. Write down three qualities your body needs to overcome the agitation:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Become quiet and see yourself applying these qualities. You can visualize, or move your body, bringing breath awareness to it. Notice what changes. Write down ONE positive statement of the change you noticed or make a drawing of your body now.

## **Material**

paper, pen, crayons

## **Method**

self-exploration, internalization, mindfulness, body work.

## **Advice for Facilitators**

If the exercise is performed in a small group, it is advisable for the facilitator to prepare the steps for performing the exercise in advance. In the final part of the exercise, participants present their own internal experiences and the tools used (e.g. sketches, etc.). In conclusion, the group can create a joint poster of positive messages, formed by the participants in the final part of the exercise, based on the previous discussion.

## **Source (APA)**

Mischke-reid, Manuela. (2018). *Somatic Psychotherapy Toolbox*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI, Inc.

## **Handouts**

[List of possible symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue.](#)

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