

# Supporting Incarcerated Survivors: Self-Care for Advocates

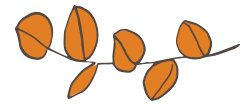
Rape crisis advocates who work in any setting are at high risk for vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. As such, it is important that advocates practice self-care. This is especially true for advocates who provide services to survivors in detention. The challenges of working in a detention facility include:



- Knowing that a survivor cannot leave their traumatic environment, often for a lengthy or indefinite period of time
- Having clients transferred to different facilities, sometimes without notice
- Facing limitations on the services you provide, such as time constraints on hotline calls
- Dealing with bureaucratic red tape to get facility clearances and provide services

Advocates who deliver services behind bars may experience guilt, shame, and feelings of anger and sadness that linger long after

their visit with a client. They are likely to have deep frustrations with the corrections agency itself for their inflexibility and the poor conditions inside facilities.

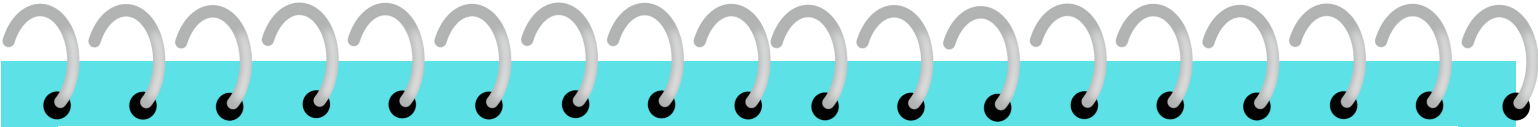


To help counteract the vicarious trauma that can result from this work, advocates should have practices in place that promote resilience and support their well-being.

A self-care plan can reduce the impact of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. You can use the chart below to brainstorm activities that may work well for you, as well as the people and organizations you may reach out to for support. It can be helpful to keep copies of this worksheet at your desk or to review it with people whom you can count on for support.

Remember: You matter and you are worthy of self-care!

"Care" category	Example activities	People/organizations /activities
Cognitive	Complete a Sudoku puzzle, join a book club	



Emotional	Journal, process with a colleague	
Physical	Drink water, do deep breathing exercises	
Spiritual	Meditate, visit a nature spot	
Community	Reach out to a friend, volunteer, create affinity groups at work	
Professional	Turn off notifications after work hours, declutter desk, ask for help	