



how to care for those who are caring for families

practical workshop

Sikunye seeks to equip and support churches to care for families in the First Thousand Days (FTD). This reflection is part of a range of Practical Workshops hosted by Sikunye, aimed at equipping churches to become FTD-Friendly.

[Watch the video here](#)

*What happens when caring for others starts to feel like it is too much?

There is an emotional and personal cost when caring for others and often supporting people can leave us feeling overwhelmed, drained, or like we're carrying more than we can sustainably carry.

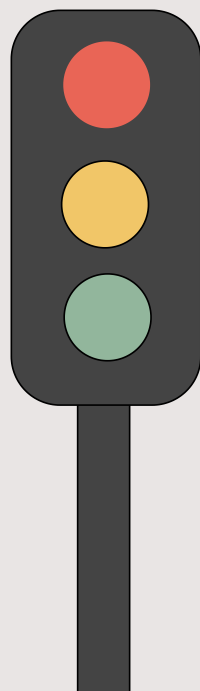
compassion fatigue: the emotional, physical, and psychological exhaustion that comes from long periods of caring for others, particularly in high-stress environments.

We show up with compassion to support families navigating the vulnerable and demanding season of the First Thousand Days by listening, praying, and offering practical help. We embody the heart of Jesus and live out His call to carry each other's burdens.

*What you can do when a story touches your own?

Sometimes, while supporting someone, their story can stir something in you. You may feel anxious or sad, struggle to stay present, become emotional, or feel an urge to end the conversation. These reactions can be different for everyone.

You can use these three steps of the traffic light to help you process when this happens



stop

What am I feeling?

pause

Why might this story be affecting me?

go

What do I need to do now?



*Stepping back does not mean that you don't care.
Sometimes, stepping back is how you make sure you can continue to care well.*



How do you set healthy boundaries?

1. Be clear on what you can and can't offer

You can care deeply about a family without being able to meet every need they have. You don't have to become the solution to every problem. Sometimes your role is to listen, pray, support and then help connect someone to the right person or service.

2. Pay attention when your care starts becoming responsibility

When you start feeling that "I have to fix this" or "I am responsible for making this better," that's a moment to pause and look at our boundaries.

3. Remember that boundaries don't make us less caring

Knowing when you are available, communicating that clearly, keeping appropriate limits and knowing when to involve someone else can actually help you care sustainably.

4. Team with others, don't do this work alone

You need people who can listen to you, pray with you, help you think through difficult situations and notice when you may be carrying too much.

5. Notice what happens in you

Some stories will touch your own story. Some situations will be difficult. That isn't something to be ashamed of. But it is an invitation to pause, notice what is happening in you and take care of yourself.

a boundary =

the guidelines and limits that you set for yourself and others, to protect your well-being and to build healthy relationships



Self-care

Self-care is about restoration, not just escaping. What truly helps you restore your energy? What fills your tank?

When caring for yourselves look at these three areas: mind, body and soul. This is because God created you as whole person. Your thoughts, your emotions, your bodies and your spiritual life is all connected. And when you are caring for others, God doesn't ask you to ignore yourself in the process. He invites you to pay attention to what is happening within you.





how are you taking care of yourself as you care for and support others?

The greatest commandment, calls us to love our neighbours but this is connected to how we love ourselves: "love your neighbour as you love yourself".

So, therefore, how are you caring for and looking after yourself? How are you loving yourself so that you can love others. To often, as Christians we are good at giving and giving of our time and energy to others, but seldom do we stop to look after ourselves. This can leave us feeling empty, drained, tired, and weary.

When you nurture your own heart and soul, you are better able to serve from a place of overflow rather than depletion or empty. Remember: you cannot pour from an empty cup. Jesus often withdrew to quiet places to pray, not because He didn't care, but because He understood that sustained compassion requires regular restoration and connection with His father in heaven.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Galatians 6:9-10



www.sikunye.org.za | info@sikunye.org.za | +27 21 201 1493 | WhatsApp +27 63 711 3601

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