

Self-Care for Advocates Checklist

This isn't a wellness seminar. It's maintaining operational readiness.

The Four Dimensions

Dimension	Key Question	Action Examples
Physical	Am I rested, fed, hydrated?	Sleep 7+ hours before difficult conversations. Eat before advocacy events.
Emotional	Do I have someone to process with?	Weekly call with a fellow advocate. Journal after hard conversations.
Mental	Am I consuming enough non-advocacy content?	One day/week with no animal welfare content. Read fiction. Watch comedy.
Social	Do I have relationships not built on the cause?	Maintain friendships outside advocacy circles. Do non-cause activities.

Weekly Check-In

Rate each dimension 1–5 (1 = struggling, 5 = strong):

Physical: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 One action I'll take: _____

Emotional: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 One action I'll take: _____

Mental: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 One action I'll take: _____

Social: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 One action I'll take: _____

Pre-Conversation Checklist

Before any advocacy conversation, check:

- I've slept enough and eaten recently
- I'm not already angry, hurt, or depleted
- I have my triggers identified and my responses ready
- I have someone I can debrief with afterward
- I'm willing to walk away if I can't stay grounded

■ When to Seek Professional Help

If you experience any of these persistently, talk to a therapist experienced in compassion fatigue:

- Persistent nightmares about animal suffering
- Intrusive thoughts you can't control
- Inability to feel joy or connection
- Complete emotional numbness

Secondary traumatic stress is real, common in animal welfare, and treatable.