



Coping with Fatigue for Advocates

Reports of sexual violence have been everywhere in the media lately, from morning radio talk shows to your social media news feeds. Voices are being heard, victims feel safer about coming forward, and actions are being taken in response to these reports. This is a very exciting time for the movement. Yet, constantly hearing and seeing stories about sexual violence in our daily lives can leave us feeling a little fatigued or even burned out. Below are some tips for continuing to do this work while also taking care of yourself.

1. Give yourself permission to disengage from it all.

After a full day of work, it is okay to remove yourself from the sexual violence advocate world. There are a handful of ways to do this. If you are a social media user, you can block hashtags on your Twitter feed or hide posts on your Facebook wall (check out this resource called [Facebook Wellness: A Harm Reduction Approach](#)), or go completely screen free for a night! This is a good time for self-care—think books, sitcoms, and baths. Create your own safe space bubble.

2. Know your support systems.

Sometimes we need others to pull us away from work or remind us of the good things happening. When you start to feel fatigued or overwhelmed, lean on those around you. If you need to vent or just discuss the latest podcast you are listening to, know who you can go to and let that connection grow.

3. Set boundaries.

Sexual Violence conversations are hard to escape right now, so know when too much “work talk” is too much. There can be times in your life when “work talk” is not allowed—a work-free dinner night, for example. Perhaps you have friends who have been extra vocal and want to gain knowledge from you. Set time boundaries for those people. Be clear when you need a break from these conversations. If you are struggling with other topics to discuss, print off some good old-fashioned conversation cards.

4. Have scripted responses.

As advocates, it can be challenging to let an opportunity pass to respond to or engage in a conversation about sexual violence. It may help to have a set script you use when talking to others, which allows you to still contribute in a meaningful way without diving in too deep. Your script can be as simple as, “We don’t want anyone to experience sexual violence.”

5. Use social media to share and support.

If you are sick of talking to people but still want to fight the good fight, use that social media power. A simple “like” on someone’s post shows your support. Sharing articles is another good way to provide information to others without being committed to having a conversation. If someone leaves a comment, you can take time to think about a response and do not need to reply immediately.

6. Give yourself space for tension points.

With the rise of victims’ voices comes the shining of light on those who cause harm, and there can be a lot of mixed emotions when we find out someone we admired has been accused. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Give yourself time to process.

7. Be aware of work culture.

If you are feeling fatigued, chances are that some of your co-workers are, too. We all handle this fatigue differently and should allow others to cope how they choose. We can still be aware of how our fatigue affects others and the workspace, however. If things are feeling extra tense or chaotic, call it out. Start a conversation around work culture that supports and honors the need for breaks.

8. Attend to your whole person.

You are more than an advocate; your job is not your whole life. It can be beneficial to find a way to separate your work self from your outside-of-work self. You get to not be an advocate sometimes. Imagine a little hat or fancy suit you put on when you step into work, then make sure to take it off as you leave. Stepping away does not make you any less of an amazing, hardworking member of the movement.