You know the saying, “a watched pot never boils”? The more awareness you have about the triggers associated with long-term compassion fatigue, the easier it is to keep from boiling over when things get too hot in the kitchen.

Let’s review!

**Don’t get caught in the compassion trap!**

Compassion fatigue can impact your performance on the job. Things like:
- decrease in quality and quantity of your work
- low level of motivation
- avoidance of job tasks
- increased level of mistakes
- setting perfectionist standards
- becoming obsessed with details

**LEVEL 1**

As veterinary team members, it’s important to recognize behavior patterns that could be harmful down the road. Think about your ability to “turn off” at the end of a difficult day. Healthy work-life boundaries begin with a solid understanding of your emotional abilities.

**LEVEL 2**

Think about your exposure to suffering in others (both in animals and in people). Now think critically about how you respond. Do you feel a compulsion to relieve suffering in your presence? Consider your boundaries—do you ever put those aside to feed the compulsion to heal?

**LEVEL 3**

You’re not boiling over, but you’re cooking. When you combine prolonged exposure to suffering with Level 2’s compulsion to relieve it, plus your own personal experiences and other life demands—unexpected changes in schedules, routines, responsibilities—without maintaining healthy boundaries, you’re on the path to...

**LEVEL 4**

Compassion fatigue. This is a state of tension and preoccupation with the traumalized by:
- Re-experiencing traumatic events
- Avoidance/numbing reminders
- Persistent stimulation

Chart inspired by Charles R. Figley, PhD, additional information can be found at [www.slideshare.net/AlyChristianson/compassion-fatigue-5617284](http://www.slideshare.net/AlyChristianson/compassion-fatigue-5617284)