

# SELF-CARE: Steering through your “River of Well-Being”



**Picture a river in your mind: chaos swirls on one bank, marked by overwhelming emotions and disorder, while apathy defines the other, characterized by numbness and inflexibility. Your mission? To navigate the river’s centre, striking an emotional balance in your job and daily life.**

Dr. Daniel Siegel’s “River of Well-being” is an effective strategy for safeguarding your mental well-being, crucial for managing stress and combating compassion fatigue. This strategy underscores the significance of mindfulness, emotional regulation, and the integral connections between the mind, brain, and relationships in sustaining mental health. Given the fast-paced nature of the healthcare environment, where external pressures and internal conflicts can readily disrupt mental equilibrium, this approach emerges as a vital tool for self-care.

## Tips for Navigating Your River of Well-Being

- Stay Aware and Open: Recognize and understand your emotions fully.
- Practice Emotional Intelligence: Learn techniques for regulating both your feelings and those of others around you.
- Try using the **S.H.I.F.T.** model to change your perspective and regain your balance:
  - S**–Seek Alternative Viewpoints: Look for different viewpoints through reading, conversations, and exploring new ideas. This will broaden your understanding and give you fresh ideas on challenging situations.
  - H**–Harness Gratitude: Appreciate the positive aspects of your life and how you have contributed to others’ well-being. This act can redirect your perspective towards optimistic and happy feelings that impact your well-being.
  - I**–Identify Limiting Beliefs: Recognize and challenge any negative assumptions holding you back. Validate their accuracy and push against them with evidence.
  - F**–Focus on the Present: Engage in mindfulness to ground yourself firmly in the now. This emotional awareness helps you navigate thoughts and feelings without being swamped by them.
  - T**–Treasure Past Successes: Reflect on your achievements to boost your self-esteem and remember your capabilities, steering your mindset towards growth and potential.

Check the simple chart on the back to learn how you can easily S.H.I.F.T. your perspective when dealing with different caring situations and managing your emotional triggers.

### Did you know?






#### Burnout vs compassion fatigue—a quick insight

Did you know you might experience burnout and compassion fatigue differently?

Burnout creeps up on you over time, draining you emotionally and making you feel detached and cynical because of ongoing stress and lack of support at work. In contrast, compassion fatigue hits you quickly due to the emotional burden of caring for distressed patients, leading to a rapid decline in your ability to empathize and causing deep emotional exhaustion. Both can deeply impact your work satisfaction and the quality of care you provide.

# A Guide to Navigating Your River of Well-Being

This guide can empower you to tackle potential emotional triggers you may encounter when providing home-based palliative care. By adopting the S.H.I.F.T. model, you can balance your emotional responses, enhance your resilience and better navigate your River of Well-Being.

Patient/Family/Caregiver Emotional Situation	Impact on Healthcare Team Competencies and Potential Triggers	Ways to Navigate These Triggers (Using SHIFT Model)
 <p><b>Feeling hopeless about illness and the future</b></p>	<p>Your skill in having difficult conversations is challenged, creating stress and discomfort.</p>	<p><b>Seek Alternative Viewpoints:</b> Confer with peers, team leads or palliative experts to learn how they handle difficult conversations. Trying new approaches can offer fresh perspectives and ease the stress of these interactions.</p>
 <p><b>Uncertain about the care being provided and the support being given</b></p>	<p>Your ability to make decisions in palliative care is tested, leading to feelings of unease and apprehension.</p>	<p><b>Harness Gratitude:</b> Take a moment each day to reflect on the positive impact you've had on patients' lives. This practice can ground you and provide a sense of purpose and confidence amidst uncertainty.</p>
 <p><b>Anxious about managing pain and symptoms</b></p>	<p>Your confidence in your care plan and symptom management strategies may waver, causing anxiety.</p>	<p><b>Identify Limiting Beliefs:</b> Examine your doubts about the care plan and symptom management effectiveness, and reassess your approach based on evidence and experience.</p>
 <p><b>Loneliness and grief about the illness</b></p>	<p>Your exposure to illness and death frequently challenges your emotional resilience, causing feelings of isolation and sorrow.</p>	<p><b>Focus on the Present:</b> Use self-reflection and mindfulness practices to manage feelings of loneliness and grief. Being present can help you navigate these emotions with compassion and maintain professional equilibrium.</p>
 <p><b>Frustrated about the number of care providers and who to contact.</b></p>	<p>The pressure to perform effectively as part of the care team can lead to self-doubt, unease and inconsistent communication.</p>	<p><b>Treasure Past Successes:</b> Reflect on moments when you've successfully made a difference in your caregiving role. Remembering these successes can boost your confidence and remind you of your value and capabilities.</p>



Established in 1990, the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) is a national non-profit membership association dedicated to advancing excellence in home and community care. Our eiCOMPASS Project aims to empower home care providers to deliver emotionally intuitive, competency-based palliative care. We are enhancing the skills of frontline providers and improving team-based care that is compassionate, responsive, and person- and family-centred. [CHCA Website](#) / [X](#) / [LinkedIn](#)

