

Signs You're Carrying Vicarious Trauma

Supporting someone through incarceration and reentry can take a deep emotional toll. This worksheet will help you recognize if you're carrying vicarious trauma—the emotional residue left by witnessing someone else's pain and survival. Awareness is the first step toward healing.

♦ Self-Check: Are You Carrying It?

- ☐ You feel exhausted, even when you've had enough sleep.
- ☐ You avoid conversations about prison or reentry because they drain you.
- ☐ You replay your loved one's stories or trauma in your head.
- ☐ You feel like it's your job to fix everything for them.
- ☐ You feel guilty when you take time for yourself.
- ☐ You're more irritable, anxious, or numb than usual.
- ☐ You have trouble sleeping or relaxing.
- ☐ You're losing interest in things that used to bring you joy.

♦ Reflection Questions

1. Which of the signs above do you relate to most right now?

2. How has supporting your loved one changed your daily life or emotional state?

3. When was the last time you did something *just* for you?

4. What would it feel like to release some of what you've been holding?

◇ Steps Toward Healing

- Talk to someone you trust about what you're feeling.
- Set a boundary that protects your energy this week.
- Take one day to rest, recharge, or do something joyful—without guilt.
- Remind yourself: You can love them and still choose *you* too.