SELF-CARE AND PREVENTING BURNOUT FOR PEER STAFF

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Today We Will Cover:

• Factors that can lead to burnout
• Prevention and early-intervention strategies
• Tools for assessing and routinely practicing self-care
You Are Uber

So yeah, we already know about self-care, but what happens...?

What takes place in a typical day?
Some Possible **Internal** Factors Include:

- Procrastination – the “I’ll do that tomorrow” syndrome
- Fear that we won’t be seen as being able to do our job
- Not seeing the results in individual’s lives that we hope for
- Feeling like we have too much to do
- “Recovery’d out”

Some **External** Factors Include:

- Documentation requirements
- Attending trainings and staff meetings
- Travel time out in the community
- Staff shortages
- Limited access to resources
- Technological challenges
- Vicarious trauma (external/internal factor)
Organizational Factors that Contribute to Burn-Out

Lack of Control
Lack of Community
Insufficient Reward

Warning Signs of Burn Out

- Exhaustion
- Lack of motivation
- **Frustration, cynicism and other negative emotions**
- Cognitive challenges (forgetting things, unable to think clearly)
- Slipping job performance
- **Interpersonal problems at home and work**
- Not taking care of yourself
- Being preoccupied with work when you’re not at work
- Generally decreased satisfaction
- Health challenges (physical and mental)
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure…

• We often wait until becoming unwell
  
  – The goal is to practice regular self-care so we can avoid becoming unwell
  
  – Learn your early warning signs
    • Ex: WRAP

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure…

• We often think “it won’t happen to me”
  
  – Burnout/becoming unwell can and will happen to all of us if we don’t practice regular self-care
  
  – It is not about how strong we are, how much time we have in recovery or how many people look up to us
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure...

• We often think our work needs to come first
  
  – Practicing self-care IS putting our work first in many ways
  
  – It is an instrumental part of our job to practice self-care
  
  – Uber analogy: we are the vehicle

5 Areas of Self-Care Practice

1. Physical
2. Psychological
3. Emotional
4. Spiritual
5. Workplace/Professional/School
10 Physical Self-Care Strategies

• Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner) and healthy
• Exercise, dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
• Get regular medical care for prevention and medical care when needed
• Take time off when needed
• Make time away from telephones

Adapted from: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

5 Psychological Self-Care Strategies

• Engage in your own personal psychotherapy
• Read literature that is unrelated to work
• Practice receiving from others
• Be curious
• Say “no” to extra responsibilities sometimes

Adapted from: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)
5 Emotional Self-Care Strategies

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- Express your outrage in social action, letters and donations, marches, protests
- Play with children

Adapted from: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TS/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

5 Spiritual Self-Care Strategies

- Spend time with nature
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be open to not knowing
- Contribute to causes in which you believe
- Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)

Adapted from: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TS/CAAP (Norton, 1996)
5 (+ 1) Workplace Self-Care Strategies

• Take a break during the workday (e.g. lunch)
• Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
• Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting
• Get regular supervision or consultation
• Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
• Seek out mentors outside of the workplace

Adapted from: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

Self-Care as a Personal Responsibility

• Self-care is a personal responsibility
  – The workplace, while it can be a place of support, ought not be our sole or primary place of support
  – Mentors, supporters and activities outside of the workplace are key

• Your wellness is needed!
  – Not only by those you serve and the field-at-large, but also by your family, friends, partners, the other communities you are a member of and, most of all, YOU.
Self-Care as an Ethical Responsibility

• As certified professionals, it is our ethical duty to practice good self-care

• Remember the creed of “do no harm”
  – If we don’t practice good self-care, not only can we experience harm but we can also cause harm to those we serve

• For some of us, tapping into our desire to best serve others can motivate us to practice self-care
  – Role modeling self-care for peers
  – Being the best version of you that you can be for others

The Difference Between Seeming OK and Being OK

• Much of our time is spent in “seeming ok”
  – Role modeling recovery
  – Being a beacon of hope
  – Having people “look up to us”
  – Supporting people who may be struggling more than we are

• It can become easy to believe we are ok when spending so much time having to seem ok

• We need to BE ok

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Tools for Self-Care

**Self-Care Assessment Worksheet**: Provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care and a scale to assess how frequently each strategy is practiced.


**Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)**: Measures compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Link to ProQOL: [http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html](http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html)

**Employment Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)**: Tool for identifying what it is like when you are well, early warning signs of becoming unwell and an individualized toolbox of resources and strategies for staying well or becoming well again.


Questions and Comments