Today’s Presenter

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• Sr. Director, Children and Trauma-Informed Services
• National Council for Mental Well-Being
Let's take a minute....
Work Force Concerns

**Compassion Fatigue** – profound emotional and physical wearing down that happens when helpers are unable to rest and refuel

**Secondary Traumatic Stress** – mirrors the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder

**Vicarious trauma** – profound shift in world view

**Burnout** – physical and emotional exhaustion experienced when a worker has low job satisfaction and feels powerless and overwhelmed at work

**Moral injury** – occurs when people face obstacles in living out personal and ethical standards
We are striving to achieve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compassion Resilience</th>
<th>Compassion Satisfaction</th>
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<td>The ability to maintain our physical, emotional and mental well-being while responding compassionately to people who are suffering</td>
<td>The ability to experience pleasure from doing the work</td>
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Continuum of Stress

**POSITIVE STRESS**
Mild/moderate and short-lived stress response necessary for healthy development

**TOLERABLE STRESS**
More severe stress response but limited in duration which allows for recovery

**TOXIC STRESS**
Extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the body’s stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult

Intense, prolonged, repeated and unaddressed

Social-emotional buffering, parental resilience, early detection, and/or effective intervention

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ACEs Connection Presentation, 2018
We don’t need to be afraid of stress
Hierarchy of Brain Development

- Cortex
- Limbic
- Midbrain
- Brainstem

Abstract Thought
Concrete Thought
Affiliation
“Attachment”
Sexual Behavior
Emotional Reactivity
Motor Regulation
“Arousal”
Appetite/Satiety
Sleep
Blood Pressure
Heart Rate
Temperature

Bruce Perry, 2002

Activation of the Stress Response System

Calm/Alert
Alarm
Fear
Terror

Perry, B. and Szalavitz, M. 2006, 2017
Survival Mode Response

Inability to
• Respond
• Learn
• Process
Warning Signs

Thinking the worst in every situation
Reacting disproportionately
Never taking a vacation
Forgetting why you do your job
Decreased performance at work
Constantly not getting enough sleep
Increased arguments with your family
Decreased social life
Moral Injury

In traumatic or unusually stressful circumstances, people may perpetrate, fail to prevent, or witness events that contradict deeply held moral beliefs and expectations. A moral injury can occur in response to acting or witnessing behaviors that go against an individual's values and moral beliefs:

- Act of commission
- Act of omission
- May include feeling betrayal from leadership, others in positions of power or peers
- Includes distressing psychological, behavioral, social, and sometimes spiritual aftermath of exposure to such events
Some Moral Emotions

- Guilt
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Alienation
- Sorrow
- Remorse
- Outrage/Anger
- Disgust
- Contempt
- Revenge

Relation of PTSD to Moral Injury


The above diagram created by William Nash, M.D., USN ret., Greater Los Angeles VA
Compassion Fatigue’s Path

1. Compassion Resilience
2. Zealot
3. Renewal vs Pathology
4. Irritability
5. Zombie
6. Withdrawal
7. Leave Profession

Eric Gentry, PhD. 2012
Stress vs. Burnout

**Stress**
- Characterized by over-engagement
- Emotions are overactive
- Produces urgency and hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Leads to anxiety disorders
- Primary damage is physical

**Burnout**
- Characterized by disengagement
- Emotions are blunted
- Produces helplessness and hopelessness
- Loss of motivation
- Leads to depression
- Primary damage is emotional

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Regulation

The basic strategy for quieting our lower brain

“Regulation gives us the ability to put time and thought between a feeling and an action.”  Bruce D. Perry
Impacting the Lower Brain

- Rhythmic
- Respectful
- Rewarding
- Repetitive
- Relational
- Relevant
Self-Regulation Strategies

Breathing
Movement
  • Walk & talk
Trigger identification
Take a break/safe spot
Mindfulness
Yoga techniques
Music
Sensory breaks
Grounding techniques
Progressive muscle relaxation
Roadmap for Regulation

Regulate – physical calming strategies needed for the brainstem and midbrain

Relate – focused on the relationship

Reason – focused on reasoning and solving problems

Breathing
Grounding Exercises

- Hold a pillow, stuffed animal or a ball
- Place a cool cloth on your face, or hold something cool such as a can of soda
- Listen to soothing music
- Put your feet firmly on the ground
- FOCUS on someone’s voice or a neutral conversation
- 5-4-3-2-1 Game

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Talking about systemic racism

NN COVID-19 Stress, Distress & Trauma Series (2020, June 15)
Transgenerational Trauma & Racism with Lea Denny & Stephen Bradley

https://vimeo.com/429647117
Embrace Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another
I feel with you, I am with you

Sympathy
I feel for you. I see you over there and that sucks, so I am glad I’m over here.

I am bad
I am unworthy of love and connection
I am a mistake

I did something bad
I made a mistake

Shame

Guilt

Four Steps to Shame Resilience

• Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers
• Practicing critical awareness
• Reaching out
• Speaking shame

Self-Compassion – Kristin Neff

Dr. Kristen Neff: 3 Elements of Self-Compassion

- **Self-Kindness:** Understanding, not punishment
- **Sense of Common Humanity:** Everybody goes through this
- **Mindfulness:** Neither ignoring nor exaggerating feelings of failure
Mindful Behavior

Being Mindful creates space to pause... Replacing impulsive reactions with thoughtful responses.

Autopilot/Reactive Behavior

- **Stimulus**
- **Reaction**

Mindful Behavior

- **Stimulus**
- **Pause**
- **Response**
Consider WAIT

Why am I talking?

Coach yourself to calm down and keep focusing on the end in mind.
  • What are the outcomes?
  • What do I want to have happen?

Increase the space between a stimulus and a response
Strive to respond rather than react

Asking for Help

Be smart enough to know when you need help and brave enough to ask for it.
Embrace Boundaries: What’s OK and What’s Not OK

Healthy Boundaries

Examples of "un-healthy" Boundaries

- Limited non-existent
- Loose or porous
- RIGID "a wall"
Tips for Setting Compassionate Boundaries

1. Know what you want to say “Yes” to in your life (values and priorities).
2. Be proactive. Have “meetings” to discuss boundaries. Structure offers safety for both sides.
3. Just say it! Don’t make them guess. Use simple and direct language.
4. Reinforce by pointing out the violations IN THE MOMENT.
5. Give explanations that are specific, relevant to the other person, and offer shared solutions.
6. Back up your boundary with action. If you give in, you invite people to ignore your needs.
Self Expectations—*must...need...should*

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<tr>
<th>Unrealistic hurtful self-expectations</th>
<th>Positive Self-Affirmations</th>
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“A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life.”

— Christopher K. Germer

[www.Thenationalcouncil.org](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org)
Define Expectations

Unclear, hidden or unrealistic expectations drive compassion fatigue.
Compass Model of Wellness

**Heart**
- Relationships
- Emotions

**Mind**
- School/work
- Organization

**Spirit**
- Core Values
- Rest and play

**Strength**
- Stress resilience
- Care for the body

[Image for Mental Wellbeing]
Recognize our Humanity

We’re all just trying to survive

We frequently observe misplaced Coping Strategies

We are all part of the problem therefore we can all be part of the Solution
Provider Resilience App
Activity: Listening and Responding to Your Body’s Stress Alarm

The human body is amazing and often recognizes that it is undergoing stress before you do mentally and it will give you signs. For example, you may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or low energy. Everybody responds to stress differently, and becoming aware of the signs your body gives is one of the steps in becoming stress resilient. Take time to reflect on what your body is signaling to you in times of stress.

1. How does your body let you know that you are getting out of balance, heading into stress?

Often we adjust our habits related to caring for our body in response to stress. What patterns do you notice in the following three areas of your health habits?

2. What do you notice about your eating habits when you are stressed?

3. What do you notice about your physical exercise habits when you are stressed?

4. How about your sleep pattern?

As you review your answers, identify:
Wellness and Resilience Strategies: Heart

Activity: Self-Compassion Scale

Used in this toolkit with permission from Dr. Kristin Neff

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner. You can also take this self-scale online with automatic scoring.

Almost never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Almost always
---|---|---|---|---|---

1. I’m disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. _____
2. When I’m feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that’s wrong. _____
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through. _____
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world. _____
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I’m feeling emotional pain. _____
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy. _____
7. When I’m down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am. _____
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself. _____
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance. _____
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people. _____
11. I’m intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like. _____
12. When I’m going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need. _____
13. When I’m feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am. _____
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation. _____
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition. _____
16. When I see aspects of myself that I don’t like, I get down on myself. _____
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective. _____
18. When I’m really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it. _____
19. I’m kind to myself when I’m experiencing suffering. _____
Compassion Resilience Reflection

Take away
Activity: Developing an Emotional Regulation Plan

We all experience times when we feel overwhelmed and allow our feelings to control our actions. But to successfully cope with stressful events, we must learn to inhibit some responses while employing others, more positive ones. The ability to identify and name emotions, assess internal strategies and external supports, and act to make our environment safer are key to regulating negative, reactive emotions.

Answer the following questions to lay out what your own emotional regulation plan would look like:

1. What stressful events occur? What emotion(s) do I show that may be of concern or that I wish I had more control over? (e.g., fear, anger, jealousy, sadness, shame, etc.)
2. What do you see as your primary triggers and warning signs of stress? (e.g., not having a say or not being listened to, feeling lonely, feeling pressured, etc.)
3. What might other people notice me doing if I begin to lose control or my emotions? (e.g., pacing, becoming very quiet, being rude, isolating, etc.)
4. What strategies can you (or do you) use to increase your ability to calm down and regulate your emotions? (e.g., time to myself, humor, listening to music, talking to others, breathing, etc.)
5. What external social supports are available to you that may help?
6. What things do NOT help you keep calm or regulate your emotions? (e.g., being alone, being around people, not being listened to, etc.)

Additional Strategies for Emotional Regulation:

One way of regulating our emotions is to manage our self-talk. By asking ourselves new questions we can come up with options when upset. Here’s what a balanced conversation may sound like...

- What am I reacting to? What is it that’s really pushing my buttons here?
- Am I jumping to conclusions?
- Is there another way of dealing with this?
- Is it fact or opinion?
- Is there a different point of view to see the situation through? Think bigger picture.
- What meaning am I giving this situation?

When feeling particularly overwhelmed or when dealing with intense emotions, try the STOPP technique to help you regulate your emotions and stay calm:

- **Stop.** Don’t act immediately—pause for a moment.
- **Take a deep breath.** Notice your breathing as you breathe in and out.
- **Observe.** What am I thinking right now? What is your focus of attention? What are you reacting to? What sensations do you notice in your body?
- **Pull back.** Zoom out. Put in some perspective and ask yourself what is the bigger picture? Is this thought a fact or an opinion? What other interpretations can I give this? Is something else going on? (E.g., am I feeling for a reason other than an emotion? Am I feeling generally overwhelmed?)

Wellness and Resilience Strategies: Heart
Questions
thank you