ABC’s of Compassion
Resilience
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Outpatient Supervisor
MY PASSION

BECOMING A THERAPIST

EVERY PATIENT YOU MEET WILL LIKELY HOLD A SECRET THAT COULD BREAK YOUR HEART AND YOU WILL SHARE THEIR PAIN AND YOU WILL GROW.

CORNERCANYONCOUNSELING

https://youtu.be/8rWyFrUvdBw
Creating Compassion Resilience

What is Compassion?

- Compassion allows us to respond to pain… Through compassion, our lives become an expression of all that we understand, care about and value. A compassionate heart arises from seeing the truth of suffering and opening to it (Salzberg, 2007).

- “Sympathetic consciousness others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it” (Merriam-Webster, 2011).
What is Resilience

• “Resilience is the capacity of a system, enterprise, or person to maintain its **core purpose and integrity** in the face of dramatically changed circumstances” Andrew Zolli

• Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that **can be learned and developed** in anyone.

• “In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to **navigate** their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to **negotiate** for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.” Dr. Michael Unger
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What Does it take?

- Awareness
- Development of personal and professional skills.
- A Trauma Informed and supportive environment.
- A continuous Growth Mindset
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ABC’s of Compassion Resiliency development and practice

• A = Awareness of the definition, signs, and symptoms of compassion fatigue
• B = Balance within personal and professional lives
• C = Connection with supportive people and resources
Native American teachings of the “wounded healer” note that each time you heal someone you give away a piece of yourself until at some point you require healing.

The wounded healer phenomenon has also been noted throughout the history of counseling, psychology, and through spiritual leaders, including Jung, Nouwen, Rogers, Dali Lama.
A debilitating weariness brought about by the repetitive, empathetic response to pain and suffering. The result of absorbing and internalizing the emotions of clients and sometimes co-workers.” (LaRowe, 2005)

A state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of one’s clients as manifested in one or more ways:
- Re-experiencing traumatic events
- Avoidance/numbing of reminders
- Persistent arousal

Chronic lack of self care combined with the burden of care
A= Awareness Key features of Compassion Fatigue

- Gradual lessening of compassion over time.
- Reduced willingness to provide care-giving
- Adopting or displaying clients’ symptoms
- Blaming the clients
A= Awareness: Contributing Factors

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COMPASSION FATIGUE

Burnout

Secondary Trauma

Counter Transference
Contributing Factors: secondary Trauma

- People with continued, close contact with trauma survivors may also experience emotional disruption, becoming indirect victims of the trauma.
- The natural, consequent behaviors & emotions resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other.
- The stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.
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Contributing Factors: Burnout

- **Burnout** is a type of psychological stress
- **Occupational burnout** or **job burnout** is characterized by exhaustion, lack of enthusiasm and motivation, feelings of ineffectiveness, and also may have the dimension of frustration or cynicism and as a result reduced efficacy within the workplace
- Occupational burnout is typically and particularly found within human service professions.
  - High stress work environment
  - Emotionally demanding job
  - Chronic lack of resources(systemic)
Transference is a phenomenon in which the person in treatment redirects feelings for others onto the therapist.

Counter transference, which occurs when a therapist transfers emotions to a person in therapy, is often a reaction to transference.
A=Awareness: Common myths

1. I will “fix” the problem… save the world
2. I am responsible for outcomes
3. If I care enough, everything will be O.K.
4. People will appreciate everything I do
5. I will have enough resources
6. I know what I am getting into
7. I am invincible
8. Significant people in my life will support, understand, and approve my absence from our relationship while I invest in this compassionate mission
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Compassion Fatigue Symptoms: Silencing Response

- Provide pat answers
- Minimize client distress
- Angry with clients
- Blame clients for their experiences
- Avoid topic, change subject
- Not believing clients
- Fear what client has to say
- Difficulty paying attention
- Fake interest or listening
- Suggest client “get over it”
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Compassion Fatigue Symptoms: checklist

- Are you/Is your...
  - Ability to function is interfered with or altered?
  - experiencing situations or incidents that don't seem "typical or ordinary", it feels traumatic?
  - Experiencing “Compassion stress” that breaks through normal boundaries?
  - Losing compassion for some people while becoming over involved in others?
  - Feeling as if you are working harder but accomplishing less?
  - Becoming frustrated/irritated easily?
  - Routinely feeling bored or disgusted?
  - Struggling to sleep and regularly waking up tired in the morning and struggling to get to work?
  - Experiencing illness, headaches, stomach aches and pains?
  - Experiencing physical exhaustion and fatigue
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

*Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)*

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Never</th>
<th>2 = Rarely</th>
<th>3 = Sometimes</th>
<th>4 = Often</th>
<th>5 = Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am happy.</td>
<td>2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].</td>
<td>3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.</td>
<td>4. I feel connected to others.</td>
<td>5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].</td>
<td>7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].</td>
<td>8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].</td>
<td>9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].</td>
<td>10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Because of my [helping], I have felt &quot;on edge&quot; about various things.</td>
<td>12. I like my work as a [helper].</td>
<td>13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].</td>
<td>14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].</td>
<td>15. I have beliefs that sustain me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.</td>
<td>17. I am the person I always wanted to be.</td>
<td>18. My work makes me feel satisfied.</td>
<td>19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].</td>
<td>20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.</td>
<td>22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.</td>
<td>23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].</td>
<td>24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].</td>
<td>25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I feel &quot;bogged down&quot; by the system.</td>
<td>27. I have thoughts that I am a &quot;success&quot; as a [helper].</td>
<td>28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.</td>
<td>29. I am a very caring person.</td>
<td>30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Burnout
- Secondary Traumatic Stress
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B=Balance: Skills to build Resilience

1. Self-regulation

2. Intentionality

3. Perceptual Maturation/Self-validation

4. Connection

5. Self-care
Skills for Resiliency: Self Regulation

- Techniques used to regulate emotional intensity and control nervous system response when given a perceived threat.
  - Deep breathing
  - Grounding objects, sensory objects/habits
    - Scents, oils, air flow, temperature, concrete, taste
  - Mindfulness/meditation
  - 4-7-8 breathing
    - https://www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/breathing-exercises-4-7-8-breath/
  - Transitional Objects
  - Music and Movement
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Skills for Resiliency: Intentionality

• When people feel stressed, they are more reactive and impulsive in their responses.
  – Slow Down, Breathe, and Reflect
  – Remember mission statement, personal values, and motivation for the work you do
  – Deliberateness & Integrity
  – Take action after thinking about your purpose

• Root yourself and your practice in Intentionality by focusing on your “WHY”
Let go of obsession with outcomes
   – they are usually beyond your control. Rather focus on what you can control

We experience lots of perceived threat
   – very little real danger. So relax your body.

Relinquish entitlement.
   – Your work as a professional care provider does not entitle you to anything, you are working to fulfill your mission

Nothing is demanded of you at your work.
   – You always have the final choice.

Your workplace is always going to ask more from you than you can give
   – Do you best and be satisfied with what you are able to accomplish and communicate your needs
Skills for Resiliency: Perceptual Maturation/Self Validation

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It's You I Like

It's not the things you wear,
It's not the way you do your hair
But it's you I like.
The way you are right now,
The way down deep inside you
Not the things that hide you,
Not your toys
They're just beside you.
But it's you I like
Every part of you,
Your skin, your eyes, your feelings
Whether old or new
I hope that you'll remember
Even when you're feeling blue
That it's you I like.

Fred Rogers

Nothing can replace
the influence of unconditional love
in the life of a child.

-Mister Rogers
Trauma Informed Thoughts to remember

• We cannot take away our clients pain...Nor is it our job to

• We are not responsible for their pain.

• We can be present and bring approaches to help them take back a sense of safety, personhood, and belonging in the world – that traumatic events can take away or spoil for them.

Dr. Macy of National Trauma Center
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Skills for Resilience: Connection

• Feeling supported, heard and cared about by colleagues is a crucial skill to maintain resiliency and to combat Compassion Fatigue
  – Create openness
  – Share trauma narratives
  – Share support plans
  – Compassion resiliency groups
  – Participate in regular case consultation
Skills for Resiliency: Self Care

- Self Care needs to be adopted as a lifestyle as opposed to something we do only when feeling “empty or depleted”
  - Learn to ask for help
  - Be aware & Accept the limitations of your family, job, and self
  - Maintain discipline in daily responsibilities and duties
    - Prioritize and organize tasks
  - Take daily “time-outs”
  - Change things you can and accommodate those you can’t
  - Evaluate work/job stress vs. home/personal stressors
  - Healthy lifestyle practices
    - Regular aerobic activity, healthy diet, Sleep, social activities, Creative play, spirituality, professional enrichment
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Sometimes self-care is exercising and eating right. Sometimes it’s spending time with loved ones and taking a nap. And sometimes it’s watching an entire season on TV in one weekend while you lounge around in your pajamas. Whatever soothes your soul.

Nanea Hoffman
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B=Balance: Are you Balanced?

Measure satisfaction in the following areas by using a Balance Wheel

- Self Care
- Work
- Intimate Partner/Family
- Friends/Social Life
- Financial Aspects
- Health & Wellness/Body Image
- Spiritual Aspects
- Community/Service
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C=Connection

- Friends
- Family
- Co-workers
- Colleagues
- Supervisor
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Connection with Friends and Family

• Be Present!
  – When with friends and family be present and integrate positive adaptive experiences.
  – Spend time with “healthy” children, adults, and groups
• Accept the limitations of friends and family
  – May not understand secondary trauma→ educate them!
  – Ask for their help in identifying symptoms
  – Be receptive to their concerns
• Communicate to friends and family what your needs are
  – Daily after work routine
  – After/before high stress days
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Connection: Co-workers/Colleagues

- Co-workers:
  - Take regular time-outs together
    - Focus on non-work related topics
  - Share your triggers/stressors (trigger clients, stressful events, fears)
    - Purpose is to seek support
  - Remember to set boundaries

- Colleagues
  - Outside perspective
  - Individuals who know “you”
    - Your mission
    - Your values
    - Your triggers/traps
    - Your “red-flag” symptoms
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Connection: Supervisors

- Create openness
- Normalize asking for help

- Create a compassion fatigue awareness plan
  - Understand key features of personality, energy use and rejuvenation
  - WRAP plan format
  - Discuss “red flag” symptoms
  - Communicate about clients/cases/situations that are often triggering

- Share Professional Quality of Life Scale and utilize on a regular basis
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Thank You

We can’t practice compassion with other people if we can’t treat ourselves kindly.

Brené Brown