

Maintaining the spirit of caring: Self-care and sorry business

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Self-care

- Is there a nice balance between your work/commitments and outside life?
- Do you find your life to be generally stressful?
- Do you spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about any aspect of work or commitments
- Do you take breaks from work and other commitments from time to time?



STRESS

Occurs when the perceived DEMANDS of situation

outweigh a person's ability to easily MANAGE those demands



Stress

- When we feel threatened or challenged our body releases stress hormones
- These hormones help to energise the body to deal with the situation “fight or flight” response
- Stress is natural. We need a certain amount of stress to motivate us, help us to perform at our best and to face challenges.
- Too much stress or stress that continues for too long without a break can deplete us mentally and physically.



Intensity of stress depends on

- Duration of stressful event
- Number of stressful events
- Severity of the event
- How the individual sees the event
- Reminders that the event triggers
- Our own stress tolerance



Who is most at risk of feeling overwhelmed?

- Newest/least experienced staff
- Most caring/empathic
- Unclear boundaries
- Unresolved issues
- Other stressors
- Least supported
- Do not practice good self-care and stress management



***ALL OF US ARE VULNERABLE TO
STRESS UNDER THE RIGHT
CIRCUMSTANCES***





*Think on your own for a few minutes,
and answer these questions:*

1. Do you find your work stressful? (Think about “positive stress” as well as distress)
2. Do you spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about any aspect of your work?

Discussion Point

Join together in groups of 4 and discuss your responses for 5 minutes. Don't worry about taking notes but make sure each member in the group has an opportunity to talk. Then come back to the large group.

Warning Signs

Feelings

- Anxious/tense
- Down/blue
- Irritable/frustrated
- Numb/withdrawn/disconnected



Warning Signs

Thoughts

- Repeated thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reviewing events in your head
- Questioning your beliefs in your self



Warning Signs

Behaviors

- Hyperalert
- Keeping busy to avoid thoughts
- Withdrawing or isolating self
- Having problems getting or staying asleep
- Eating or drinking more to feel better
- Being tearful for no apparent reason



How do we balance the scales ?

Minimise the impact of negative stress in your life by:

1. Knowing our own warning signs
2. Identifying situations or events that trigger stress
3. Increasing resistance
4. Rejuvenate
5. Taking control and seeking support.



Try to adopt a lifestyle that allows for day-to-day maintenance and emergency response to stress.



Increase Resistance



- Eating a balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain adequate sleep
- Minimising strategies that deplete us eg. excess alcohol and caffeine
- Maintain strict boundaries “NO GO” times
- Maintain “normal” day to day activities
- Maintain (and invest in) supportive relationships
- Engage in regular relaxing activities
- Schedule regular pleasant activities (not work related)
- Maintain your spiritual self



Rejuvenate

- Schedule activities that release tension (eg. massage, yoga, tai chi, fishing, listening to music, walks on the beach)
- Schedule pleasurable and distracting activities
- Talk honestly and openly about your thoughts and feelings
- Talk to yourself in a helpful way
- Reward yourself for a job well done
- Debrief



Take Control

- Recognise your warning signs
- Avoid extra stress where possible
- Know your limits and learn to say “NO”
- Accept that you don’t have control over other people’s lives
- Support – debrief calls, identify issues of concern, receive support and encouragement.



Example of stress release



Debriefing is important because

- Reduces isolation
- Encourages recovery
- Care for you and the client
- Opportunity for learning
- View things differently
- Ensures the organisation is doing its job
- Recognize when you need extra help



When to seek out individual Debriefing

- Anytime you feel uncomfortable or uncertain about an encounter
- Anytime you feel concerned about a client
- When you notice your signs of stress
- When you want feedback about an encounter



Summary

- Look after yourself, the service would not exist without you!
- Your welfare is important
- Remember to aim for a work/life balance

