

Self-Care & Burnout Prevention

How to Help Yourself as a Helping Professional



Understanding the Costs of Caring

“ . . . We are stewards not just of those who allow us into their lives but of our own **capacity** to be helpful . . . ”

— Jon Conte, PhD

Three distinct costs:

- Chronic stress
- Provider Burnout
- Compassion fatigue

Helping Professionals Under Stress

- How do you know when your colleagues are stressed?
- How do you know when you're stressed?
- What happens when you're are stressed at work?

Physical/Emotional/Behavioral/Cognitive

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Stress Factors

- Work overload
- Time pressure
- Lack of social support at work
- Exposure to trauma
- Exposure to work-related violence and threats
- Role ambiguity and conflict
- Understaffing
- Career development issues

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Stress vs. Burnout

Stress

- Over engagement
- Emotions are over-reactive
- Produces urgency & hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Primary damage is physical
- Normal response to stimuli

Burnout

- Disengagement
- Emotions are blunted
- Helpless & hopeless
- Loss of motivation, ideals
- Leads to detachment & depression
- Primary damage is emotional
- Make life seem not worth living

Professional Burnout

Definition:

A state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional life.

-Herber Freudenberger

Symptoms - Maslach defines three dimensions of burnout:

1. Pervasive exhaustion
2. Cynicism
3. Inefficacy

Cause:

Results from a disproportion of job demands to job resources; chronic stress is a major factor

Burnout Symptoms in Detail

Exhaustion is...Exhaustion

- Tired even when you wake up (physical exhaustion)
- Difficulty focusing (mental exhaustion)
- Numbness (emotional exhaustion)

Cynicism is...Cold

- Jaded outlook: *behind every solution lies another problem*
- Loss of belief in employers mission and in others' goodness

Professional inadequacy is...Overwhelmedness

- Feeling professionally incompetent
- Overwhelmed by tasks large and small

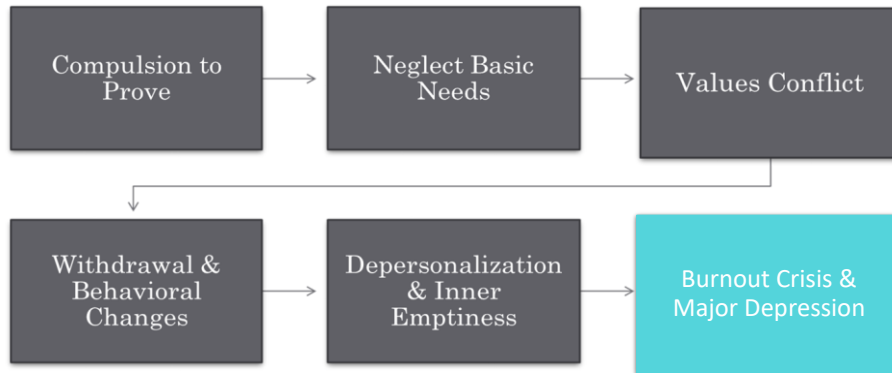
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Burnout: Differential Diagnosis

- **Demands > Resources**
 - Demands = physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of the job
 - Resources = physical, psychological, social, and organizational factors that either reduce demands or stimulate personal growth or professional development
- **Symptoms are specific to the professional sphere**
- **It's chronic!**
 - Onset is slow and condition is stable
 - Must be managed, not cured
- **It's sneaky!**
 - The most ambitious are at risk

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Freudenburger's Process of Burnout



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Compassion Fatigue

Definition:

*The emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of *traumatic events*

**Traumatic event is: "An event that causes physical, emotional, and/or psychological distress or harm" which can occur from a single traumatic incident or an accumulation of traumatic events.*

Cause:

Empathy!

It's not about demands and resources, it's about the unavoidable effects of connecting with the suffering of another person.

Anyone who works with people, their health, welfare, or trauma is at risk

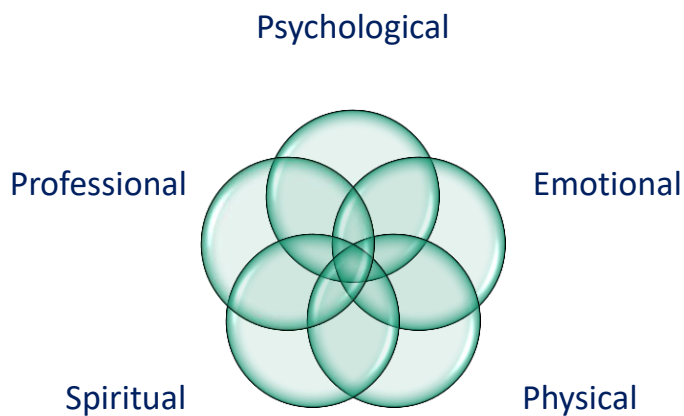
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Compassion Fatigue Symptoms

- Hypervigilance
- Hopelessness
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Avoidance of clients
- Inability to listen to clients
- Anger
- Cynicism
- Sleep disturbances
- Fear
- Chronic exhaustion
- Physical ailments
- Minimizing
- Guilt

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Wellness & Self-Care



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Wellness Inventory: Self-Assessment

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Focus on Wellness

1. Cognitive restructuring to reframe negative thoughts
2. Self-care and renewal techniques
3. Relaxation techniques

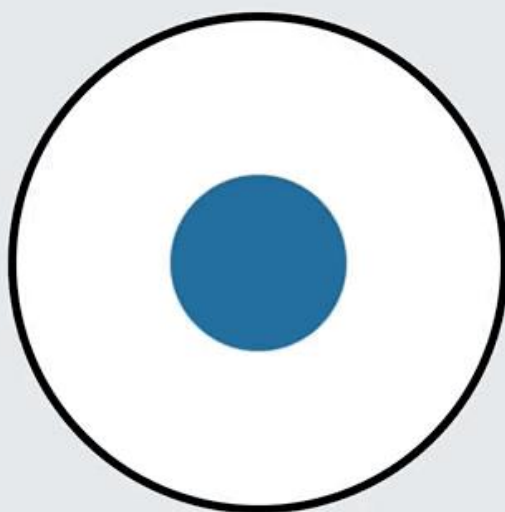
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1. Reframing Negative Thoughts

A man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed seeds will fall therein, and will continue to produce their kind.

-James Allen, As a Man Thinketh

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Making Self-Care a Priority

- One thing you will start doing tomorrow?
- How will you support each other?
- What could your manager or organization do to support you?
- Complete your self-care plan.

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Questions & Thank You!

Tyler Asman, MSW
tyler.asman@uw.org



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