



CONCORDIA
GRADUATE &
CONTINUING STUDIES

Ferocious Self-Care: Self-Care and Supervision

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Question – Take a moment and reflect

Do you feel you are currently practicing self-care daily and have achieved a well-balanced life? What are some of the barriers if you feel you are out of balance?

Why Ferocious?



Time to Walk the Walk



FACTS ON STRESS

- 75% of all medical complaints have stress related components
- 50% of population suffers from at least one stress symptom regularly

STATS ON SOCIAL WORKERS

- Over 750,000 social workers in US (US Bureau of Labor)
- 48% experience high levels of work-related personal distress (Strozier & Evans) which impact their lives negatively – this was pre-pandemic!

BELIEFS THAT DON'T SERVE US WELL

- We should know better (practice what we preach?)
- Personal problems are a sign of inadequacy or failure
- No safe place to ask for help – confidentiality concerns
- We should know the resources and have the skills for all problems to take care of ourselves
- Intellectualize or disassociate from the impact of the problems
- We wait longer than others and often sabotage our own treatment

Pandemic – what did we learn?



Incivility in Our Society



Work/life Balance vs Blending



If not now, when!!!!



History of Self-Care

- Despite growing empirical data on wellness and self-care, limited integration exists within behavioral health and other helping programs
- Council on Social work recently added self-care as a requirement of their educational programs
 - Encourages learning resources and gaining skills
 - Should be practiced at the beginning and end of educational experience
 - Suggested it be integrated into training
- Psychologist programs also lack education and integration of self-care
- Counseling of Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) recently required self-care to be incorporated into counseling programs
- Most of the research on self-care for educators has started within the past 6 years (2018-2020)

NASW Response

- Recognized as a long-standing issue for professionals
- Connection to professional excellence and ethical practice
- Empirical research demonstrating that proactive self-care reduces likelihood of impairment, job satisfaction, and longevity in our careers.

New Self-care Language

- Located in the Purpose section and the Ethical Principles section under Integrity.



Purpose section wording

- Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social work self-care.

Value Principle – Integrity wording

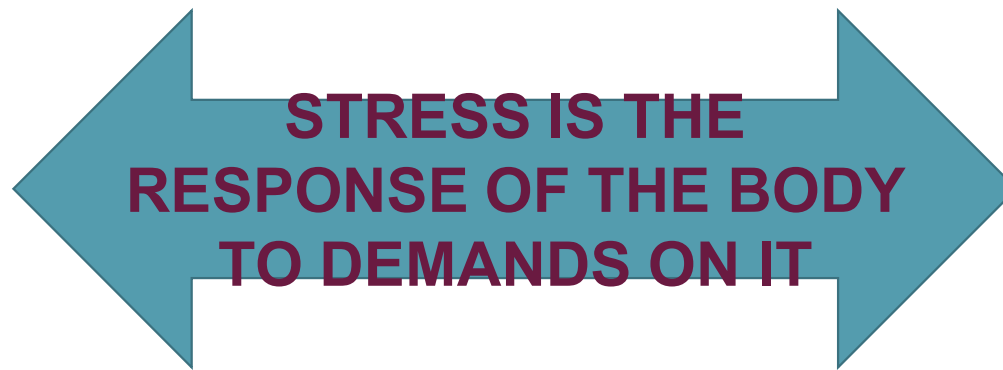
- Social workers are continually aware of the professional mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Professional self-care is a critical component to providing quality services and preventing burnout and compassion fatigue.

True self-care is not salt baths and chocolate cake. It's about making the choice to build a life you don't need to escape from.



STRESS



DISTRESS

When stress
controls you

EUSTRESS

When you control the
the stress

**“I am
perfectly
aware of
how
stressed I
am!”**



KNOW YOUR SIGNS

- Exhaustion
- Frequent headaches
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- High self-expectations
- Hopelessness, depression
- Hypertension
- Anger, blaming
- Increased irritability
- Less ability to feel joy
- Workaholic behaviors
- Inability to maintain balance of empathy and objectivity – Boundary concerns
- Abusing drugs, alcohol, food
- Chronic lateness
- Diminished sense of personal accomplishment
- Low self-esteem
- Sleep disturbances

Know your signs

- Relationship problems at home
- Feelings of no longer being effective with clients
- Depression
- Hyper-vigilance
- Higher incidence of suicide
- Higher turnover rate in employment
- Higher rates of burnout
- Disruptive symptoms in personal life
 - To be reviewed later



Terms

- **Burnout** - Progressive State, Occurring over time with contributing factors including clients, organization and practitioner, organizational stressors
- **Compassion Fatigue** – both burnout and trauma exist together
- **Shared Trauma** – when you share the same trauma as your clients
- **Secondary Trauma** – emotional duress that results from hearing about another's trauma
- **Vicarious Trauma** – empathetic engagement with clients who have experienced trauma

Self-care in the media

- Often portrayed as “indulgences” or “luxuries”
- Pride often shared in not needing this or being able to continue forward – head down we plow the field



Self-care and Wellness

- Meyers & Sweeney (2005) defined self-care as a “component of wellness”
- A working definition of self-care may be engagement in any activity which enhances an individual’s overall wellness in accordance with the determinants of health
- Encompasses holistic health, prevention, and wellness

Supervision & Wellness

- Begin with creating an environment of safety
 - Supervisory relationship
 - Humor
 - Clear focus to include wellness
- Be genuine and congruent to the model (practice what we preach)
 - Our actions are equally as important as our words
- Be cognizant to remain non-judgmental and avoid shaming

Supervision & Wellness

- Be open to vulnerability
 - Supervisory relationship is personal
 - Within boundaries and ethics
- Normalize through appropriate self-disclosures
- Focus on the relationship with the supervisee
 - Clarity, consistency – reinforces significance
 - Developing, on-going – model growth

A Personalized Meaning of Wellness

Different for
everyone

Different at
different ages
and stages

Wellness =
balance

Holistic

Re-evaluate
plan at regular
intervals

Tie in with
supervision

COMPASSION SATISFACTION

- While there is risk to our wellness, empathic work we do is also a protective factor
- Being satisfied with doing the work of caring
- Perception of reward or importance of what you do and your impact on those you serve
- Accept your “wounded-ness”, your humanity

REFLECTION

When experiencing difficulty in discerning our own needs, it may be helpful to begin by observing what you provide for others. Often we give to other people that which we unconsciously know we need ourselves.

SELF-CARE PLAN

- Develop your early alert system
 - What are my responses...weak links, early signs

- Short and Long term plans

- Small, medium and supersize responses



Additional Steps

1. DEVELOP A CONSISTENT PLAN TO ENGAGE IN MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING ACTIVITIES
 - What does this look like for your supervisee in each of these areas?
 - Be specific with activities, intervals, and follow-up
2. SCHEDULE REJUVENATION AND RESTORATION AROUND TIMES OF HIGH-STRESS
 - What might these look like for your supervisee?
 - Are there certain times, certain clients, etc.?
3. PREPARE A LIST OF EMERGENCY STRATEGIES
 - Incorporate any policies or expectations surrounding incidents at your agency
 - Know your supervisees areas of strength and difficulties

Handout Dimensions

- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Social and Relationships
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Workplace

Handout Resiliency Boosters

- Honest feedback
- Who I support
- Who supports me
- Ideas
- Advice
- Helping Hand
- Fun/Activities
- Roadblocks
- Spiritual guidance
- Accountability

STRATEGIES

Creating our own plan
(See Handout)

Strategies

- Don't make big decisions
- Don't go for the big fix
- Have fun! Find a way each day to enjoy humor!

Question and Reflect

Does your organization have a system, policy or practice in place that supports and encourages self-care of staff? Yes or No. Is it lacking in some aspect?

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Supported by Code of Ethics – Recently added to the purpose and Ethical Principles section.
- Personal Response
- Supervisory Response
- Organizational Response



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