You Can’t Pour From an Empty Cup:
Strengthening Ethical Social Work Practice through Self-Care

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Director, Collaborative Community Impact
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[Signal Centers Logo]
You Can’t Fill from an Empty Cup: Part 1

01 Discuss wellness and how it is an ethical obligation

02 Review stress’s impact on us

03 Define the ABCs of self-care and discuss

04 Analyze a case-study and discuss
A few tips for a present, connected process in a virtual setting*

- **Grace with process**: Thank you in advance for your understanding of tech issues or glitches
- **Grace with each other**: Strive for presence, if possible, and give grace when you can
- **Take care of yourself**: Take a break if you need one. Try to minimize distractions and/or turn off your video
- **Mute your microphone**: If you have a comment or question of the presenters, use the “raise hand” feature and strive to be lean in your expression (space bar temporarily unmutes)
- **Ask questions to and for the whole group by** using the chat feature at any time.
- **Please announce yourself before speaking** so everyone (especially those attending via phone) know who is speaking
- **Passing is participation**: All levels of participation are welcomed and encouraged.

*Adapted from Leigh Ann Roberts, The Circle Center
Self-Care Alert!

- Step out for a break
- Talk to someone you trust
- Do something relaxing or creative
- Use regulation tools
- B R E A T H E
- Get some water

It’s a good day to take care of yourself (so is every other day).
Chat Now

510-674-1414
Monday - Friday
8:30am - 8:00pm PT

Hi, I need to talk. Is anyone there?

Hi, I’m here. What would be most helpful to talk about right now?

Something just happened at work. I’m not sure what to do.

Confidential Support for Work Issues

Text with a Peer Counselor
In break out groups, answer this question: “What do you think when you hear “self-care?”

Next, answer this question: “What has self-care practice been like for you during the COVID-19 pandemic?”
NASW Code of Ethics – Ethical Principles

- Dignity & Worth of the Person
- Social Justice
- Service
- Human Relationships
- Competence
- Integrity
- Competence
4.05 Impairment

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.
2.08 Impairment of Colleagues

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.
3.07 Administration

(c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.
3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.
“People who work in the social service field are, if anything, more likely to have suffered from childhood adversity. Many people go into this work as a helping professional because of their own struggles with loss and injury.” - Bloom & Farragher

One survey of 350 human service workers found...

- 80% of staff had an ACE
- 66% abused in some way
- 47% neglected
- 40% lived with substance abuse
- 41% had broken homes
- 10% grew up in households with someone in prison
Social Work = High Stress

6 different studies, from 1996-2015, 5 different countries

Social workers experienced:

- 57-93% verbal abuse
- 47-77% threats
- 21-47% property stolen/damaged
- 8-56% physical assault
- 18% threats with a weapon
- 9-15% racially/ethnically harassed
- 15-29% sexual harassment
The Impact of Stress & Trauma on Staff

- Staff may be triggered by youth & families, coworkers, or the system itself
- This impacts decision-making ability and relationships (personal & professional)
- Leads to burnout, more absenteeism/less presenteeism, reports of vicarious trauma, and PTSD symptoms
• VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN6g2mr0p3Q&t=4s
### Workplace Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having too much or too little to do</th>
<th>Random interruptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pervasive uncertainty</td>
<td>Mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding changes</td>
<td>Unexplained or unannounced change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicious office politics</td>
<td>Unclear policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>No sense of direction</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No appreciation</td>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downsizing and turnover</td>
<td>Experiencing workplace racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfairness</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GREATEST STRESSOR:** Lack of control over their participation or the outcome of their work
Chat Time!

In our new working situations, what extra stressors might exist in our work-lives?

Type your answers in the chat!

5 min
4 min
3 min
2 min
1 min
Mental Health Outcomes from Stress &/or Trauma

**Burnout:**
- Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Low professional accomplishment
  - Job change helps

**Compassion Fatigue:**
- Reduced ability to feel empathy
  - Seek help
  - Take a step away

**Vicarious Trauma:**
- Changes in worldview
  - Seek help
  - Take a step away

**Secondary Traumatic Stress:**
- Secondary PTSD
  - Seek help to cope with symptoms

**Social Distancing (Quarantine) Fatigue:**
- Loneliness
  - Find ways to connect

- Seek help
- Take a step away
ABCs of Self-Care

Awareness
Balance
Connection
Awareness

What triggers your stress response?

- Keep a journal about when you realize you’re feeling stress or feeling sad, irritated, frustrated, angry, etc.
- Think about times you reacted without thinking or were overly defensive
- Are there times when your body is all tensed up or expressing a reaction to stress?

What calms you down?

- Think through the questions of what, where, and when
- Can you make a list of 3 things you can do to de-stress?
- What other activities could you try?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early morning</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>On porch</td>
<td>Hot shower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After bedtime</td>
<td>Hammack</td>
<td>Video game</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch time</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>In the sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throughout day</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
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<tr>
<td>After work</td>
<td>Craft room</td>
<td>Praying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before wake-up time</td>
<td>In car</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few minutes in workday</td>
<td>Couch</td>
<td>Zumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 2:30</td>
<td>On Xbox</td>
<td>Animal Crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 8pm</td>
<td>With animals</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between sessions</td>
<td>Living room</td>
<td>Martial arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Care Sunday</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late at night when I can’t</td>
<td>My room</td>
<td>Listening to music</td>
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<tr>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>Baking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commute time</td>
<td>Pool/ocean</td>
<td>Running</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family distracted</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Netflix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning coffee</td>
<td>Lowes</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 5 pm</td>
<td>Mountains</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before new activity or task</td>
<td>Shower</td>
<td>Planting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extra Ideas
Trauma-Informed Self-Care

Incorporates an understanding of trauma and the effects of trauma on the worker and clients.

▪ EXAMPLES:
  ▪ Seeking supervision
  ▪ Working within teams
  ▪ Attending trauma-specific training
  ▪ Balancing caseloads
  ▪ Assessing a range of personal stress-reducing strategies, such as:
    ▪ Practicing stress management techniques
    ▪ Developing a plan for work–life balance
    ▪ Seeking therapy for personal issues triggered by work
“Instead of mercifully judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?”

- Neff
Self-Compassion Misconceptions

1. Will undermine motivation
   • Less fear of failure
   • More likely to try again
   • More motivation to change,
   • More likely to try harder
   • Avoid repeating mistakes

2. It’s a weakness
   • A way to cope

3. Leads to self-indulgence
   • Promotes health related behaviors
     - Quite smoking
     - Drink less
     - Eat healthier
     - Exercise more
Self-Compassion Benefits

Benefits:
- Increased ability to cope with negative emotions
- Decreased Rumination
- Increases positive mindset
  - Happiness
  - Optimism
  - Wisdom
  - Curiosity
  - Exploration

DON'T REJECT YOURSELF.
MINDFUL MEDITATION

“Non-judgmental attention to experiences of the present moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN6g2mr0p3Q&t=4s
1-Min Mindful Meditation

VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPR3o6Hnf2g
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindfulness in:</th>
<th>Eating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tai-Chi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Mindfulness Practices
Benefits of Mindfulness

- Increased Attention
- Helps with Sleep
- Reduce Stress & Anxiety
- Increased Executive Functioning
- Increases ability to down-regulate (calm down, relax, soothe)
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQoL)

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.

1. I am happy.
2. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
3. I feel connected to others.
4. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
5. I feel overwhelmed with the pressure I [have].
6. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
7. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
8. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
9. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
10. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
11. I like my work as a [helper].
12. I have beliefs that sustain me.
13. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
Self-Care Assessment

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

3  =  I do this well (e.g., frequently)
2  =  I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
1  =  I barely or rarely do this
0  =  I never do this
?  =  This never occurred to me
Stretch Break!

10 min left
8 min left
6 min left
4 min left
2 min left
1 min left
Stretch Break!

- 10 min left
- 8 min left
- 6 min left
- 4 min left
- 2 min left
- 1 min left
Stretch Break!

10 min left
8 min left
6 min left
4 min left
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8 min left
6 min left
4 min left
2 min left
1 min left
Stretch Break!

10 min left
8 min left
6 min left
4 min left
2 min left
1 min left
Balance

Discover what balance means for you
Between work and personal
“Find” or “make” time for self-care

Don’t believe in the work-life balance myth

Set realistic goals
What is “Balance”?

[Diagram showing balance between Health, Work, Friends, Career, Time, and Family]
What is “Balance”?”

- Work
- Career
- Family
- Health
- Friends
- Time

Work-Life Balance

The diagram illustrates the concept of work-life balance, showing how various aspects of life (work, career, family, health, friends, time) can be balanced to achieve a harmonious lifestyle.
Balance on the Beam

It isn’t about giving equal time but taking the time for what you need when you need it.
What Does Your “Balance” Look Like?
one time i went to hand someone a bowl of hot soup and my brain tried to say “careful it’s hot” and “here’s your soup” so instead i blurted out

“careful, it’s soup”
My Self-Care at Work
• VIDEO - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPR3o6Hnf2g
What Does Your “Balance” Look Like?
Connection

WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

THROUGH WORK

PROFESSIONAL HELP
Connection with Distance

- Phone Call
- 6ft Picnics
- Drive-thru Celebrations
- Letters
- Community Crafts
- Virtual Hangouts
PLEASE TAKE A PINWHEEL IF IT WILL BRIGHTEN UP YOUR DAY!!!!

Community Crafts
# Virtual Hangouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cocktail Hour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Game Night</td>
<td>• Jackbox Games</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scattagories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pictionary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Codenames</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Board Games</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Card Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knitting Circle</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Story Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Video Gaming Online</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chat Time!

What other ways have you seen or done to connect with others through this quarantine time?

Type your answers in the chat!

5 min
4 min
3 min
2 min
1 min
No Amount of Self-Care will Help if You Aren’t Supported by Your Organization...
How can Organizations Support?

Self-Care is finding sometimes simple and sometime more complex ways to help us relax, rejuvenate, and refresh; however we also need an organization and team that is willing to support these practices.

What might this look like?
ABCs of Self-Care

Connection

Balance

Awareness
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQoL)

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE (PROQoL) VERSION 5 (2009)

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<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>
</table>

1. I am happy.
2. I feel happy when I go home from work.
3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I am often started by the events I witness.
6. I feel I am treated worse than those I [help].
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
12. I like my work as a [helper].
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.

The Family Center
Self-Care Assessment

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2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
1 = I barely or rarely do this
0 = I never do this
? = This never occurred to me
My Weekly Self-Care

Areas of Care

Physical

Current Practices

New Practices
COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
HOLDING SPACE
PEER SUPPORT
SUPERVISION

Team-Care in Practice
Trauma-Informed Organizational Wellness Practices

- Structure
- Workplace Wellness Rituals/Activities
- Wellness/Self-Care Plans
- Structured Flexibility in Policies
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Employee Recognition Programs/Rituals
- TI Leadership Qualities
Breakout Groups

- Randomly-assigned breakout groups to discuss ethical principles
  - Groups 1-10: Self-impairment
  - Groups 1-20: Impairment of colleague
  - Groups 21-30: Administration
  - Groups 31-40+: Continuing Education & Staff Development

- Discuss the following questions related to your assigned ethical principle.
  - What ethical challenges are present in this scenario?
  - What tools or strategies might we use to increase our ability to find/build/promote **Awareness** & meet this standard?
  - What tools or strategies might we use to increase our ability to find/build/promote **Balance** & meet this standard?
  - What tools or strategies might we use to increase our ability to find/build/promote **Connection** & meet this standard?
Breakout Group Norms

- **Confidentiality**: Keep sacred the stories; share the lessons
- Related, only **share what you’re comfortable**.
  - Passing is still participating.
- Feel free to **disagree**. Keep it civil, y’all.
THANK YOU!

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Brad Palmertree, MSW
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References


References


