

Self-Care & Burnout

The video associated with this presentation can be found at:
<https://youtu.be/q2tsU8EwMRo>

Why do we do what we do?

- ❖ There is no denying that working with persons with sexual behavior problems is challenging.
- ❖ Some of our core members will be really good at “pushing our buttons”.
- ❖ How do we offset our natural tendencies to be empathic and helpful with our natural tendencies to be angry and upset at what our core members have done?

Why do we keep doing it?

- ❖ To reduce the number of potential victims
- ❖ We believe that core members have a right to appropriate treatment and care
- ❖ We believe that our core members can establish a quality of life as close as possible to that of others who don't offend
 - Lifestyle balance
 - Self-determinism (to the extent safely possible)

Burnout

Burnout involves physical, mental and emotional exhaustion that is attributable to stress

- ❖ Physical – chronic fatigue, weakness, low energy
- ❖ Mental – highly negative attitude toward oneself, work, and life in general
- ❖ Emotional – feeling hopeless, helpless, trapped

Predictors & Mediators of Burnout

Predicting your risk for burnout vs.
resilience:

- ❖ Workplace Risk Factors
- ❖ Individual Risk Factors

Workplace Risk Factors

- ❖ Role ambiguity
- ❖ Role conflict
- ❖ Tangible and intrinsic rewards
- ❖ Workload
- ❖ Recognition that work is valuable
- ❖ Social support

Individual Risk Factors

- ❖ Sense of control
- ❖ Turnover
- ❖ Organizational commitment
- ❖ Perception of fairness
- ❖ Fit between values
- ❖ Coping skills and strategies

Burnout

People are less at risk for burnout when they feel that they have a degree of control over their situation, if they believe they are being fairly treated, and if they and others value the work they do and are committed to it.

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ Vicarious trauma
- ❖ Compassion fatigue
- ❖ Co-victimization
- ❖ Secondary survivor
- ❖ Emotional contagion
- ❖ Cost of caring

Vicarious Trauma

VT is a human phenomenon:

...when we hold the capacity for empathy, we may experience distress when hearing about troubling things that have happened to others.

Vicarious Trauma

High risk persons are those who:

- ❖ Interview and counsel trauma victims
- ❖ Work with families and victims
- ❖ Work with persons who have abused
 - counselors, health/hospital staff, emergency workers, child protection, corrections, law enforcement, volunteers

Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious trauma challenges the core beliefs we hold about ourselves and our relationships, the nature of the world we live in, and our overall meanings and values.

VT is a normal human consequence of second-hand exposure to traumatic material.

Predictors & Mediators of Secondary Traumatic Stress Effects

- ❖ Individual Factors
- ❖ Situational & Environmental Factors

Individual Factors

- ❖ Personal History
 - Personal experiences of trauma, loss, victimization
- ❖ Personality and Defensive Style
- ❖ Coping Style
 - Coping mechanisms
- ❖ Current Life Context
 - private life situation
- ❖ Training and Professional History
- ❖ Personal Therapy

Situational Factors

- ❖ Workload
- ❖ Nature of the work
- ❖ Nature of the clientele
- ❖ Cumulative exposure to trauma material
- ❖ Relationship with co-workers
- ❖ Social and cultural context
- ❖ Supervision

Complex Stress Effects

People who volunteer with individuals at high-risk or high-need regarding sexual violence are functioning within a high-risk stress environment

Core effects:

- ❖ Physical health, anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse
- ❖ Self-perceptions and beliefs about others
- ❖ Self-esteem and interpersonal problems

Stress & The Body

Stressful experiences can affect our bodies in three ways:

- ❖ Immune System
- ❖ Neuroendocrine system
- ❖ Cardiovascular System

Effects for CoSA Volunteers

- ❖ Höing et al. (2016) have reviewed the effects of volunteering with people who have sexually offended
- ❖ Positive effects were found, in that volunteering improves physical health and mental well-being, personal growth, and citizenship
- ❖ However, being in empathic relationships with persons who have sexually offended can have both positive and negative effects on psychological and social functioning.
 - These are moderated by personal, task, and organizational characteristics.

Mitigation Factors

How well are you taking care of yourself?

- ❖ Self-care in the workplace
- ❖ Self-care in your personal life

Holistic approach

- ❖ Maintaining a balanced lifestyle is central to effective self-care

Balance & Priorities

Remember that being a helpful volunteer requires you to espouse the same values and attitudes we are trying to instill in our core members:

- ❖ Health
- ❖ Households
- ❖ Relationships – Family
- ❖ Relationships – Social
- ❖ Physical activity / Recreation
- ❖ Creative pursuits, interests, hobbies
- ❖ Existential / Spiritual life
- ❖ Work
- ❖ Social and community involvement

Mitigation Factors

- ❖ The more balanced we are across the full range of personal care, the more we are able to cope with the stresses and demands that we will face and, ultimately, be more effective as volunteers.
- ❖ Create opportunities for renewal, simple pleasures, and enjoyment.

Kindergarten

More than 30 years ago, Robert Fulghum published “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten”:

“Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school. These are the things I learned.”

Kindergarten

- ❖ Share everything.
- ❖ Play fair.
- ❖ Don't hit people.
- ❖ Put things back where you found them.
- ❖ Clean up your own mess.
- ❖ Don't take things that aren't yours.
- ❖ Say sorry when you hurt somebody.

Kindergarten

- ❖ Wash your hands before you eat.
- ❖ Flush.
- ❖ Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
- ❖ Live a balanced life.
- ❖ Take a nap every afternoon.
- ❖ When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

For Further Reading

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