Children’s Mental Health Summit: Self-Care for Mental Health Professionals

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Workshop Objectives

• Discuss societal and personal views of wellness and self-care
• Explore hindrances to wellness and the impact of lack of self-care
• Examine the importance of wellness and self-care both globally and in the helping fields
• Reflect on past personal wellness and self-care practices
• Learn new wellness and self-care habits and how to apply them to your everyday life
Perspectives of Wellness Discussion

• What comes to your mind when you hear “wellness?” “self-care?”

• What lessons or messages have you been exposed to in regard to wellness and self-care in your upbringing? present-day?

• What products and/or activities do you associate with wellness or self-care?

• What comes to mind when you hear “burnout?”
Your Wellness

• What does wellness look like to you?
  • When are you at your “best?”
  • How do you feel?
  • Is it in your control?
Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Vicarious Traumatization

- Before we focus in on wellness, we need to see what we are fighting
  - Burnout – Related to the working conditions – social conflict, work overload, lack of time, lack of resources
    - Three dimensions of burnout – cynicism, sense of ineffectiveness, exhaustion (Maslach, 2003)
  - Compassion Fatigue – Related to work with clients/recipient of care
    - A desensitization to client concerns due to the overwhelming nature of client hardships
  - Vicarious Traumatization – Results from indirect exposure to trauma
    - Personal cognitive reaction to the client’s experience (Erford, 2018)
    - Worldview and beliefs are shifted in response to exposure to client trauma (Newell & MacNeil, 2010)
What is Wellness?

• “A culturally defined state of being in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated in a way that enables a person to live a fulfilled life” (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2009, p. 63)

• “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”
  - World Health Organization, 1948
Healthcare vs Wellness

- Healthcare impacts almost every major segment of our everyday lives
  - Economically
    - Rising costs of healthcare
  - Scientifically
    - Stem-cell research, increasing lifespan
  - Politically
    - Access to healthcare, mental health insurance

- United States still runs on a medical model of healthcare
  - Reactive vs. Proactive
  - When do you go to the doctor?
  - Prescriptions
Then vs Now

- **Now vs. 1900s**
  - **Average lifespan:**
    - 1900 - 49 years old
    - Now - 77.7 years old
  - **Causes of death:**
    - 1900 - infectious diseases
    - Now - chronic lifestyle-related diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Death</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>Present Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pneumonia</td>
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<td>Heart disease</td>
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<td>Influenza</td>
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<td>Cancer</td>
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<td>Tuberculosis</td>
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<td>Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases)</td>
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<td>Diarrhea</td>
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<td>Chronic lower respiratory diseases</td>
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The United States is in desperate need of a paradigm shift in terms of healthcare
  - Politicians - legislation allowing greater access to healthcare
  - Doctors/Helpers - encouraging more proactive solutions
  - Clients/Patients - willingness to get help before it is needed
As a society, we have to change the way we see the world through our:
  - Health
  - Work
  - Stress management
  - Sleep patterns, eating habits, and exercise routines
  - Social interactions
  - Definitions of success
  - Everyday attitudes
Self-Care for the Helper

“Until you value yourself, you won’t value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.” – M. Scott Peck

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.” – Lucille Ball

“Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others” – Parker Palmer
Self-Care for the Helper

• Survey of 501 professional counselors (Lawson, 2007) found that the most endorsed career-sustaining behaviors were:
  • Sense of humor
  • Spend time with partner/family
  • Maintain balance between professional and personal lives
  • Maintain self-awareness
  • Maintain sense of control over work responsibilities.
Ten Tasks to Increase Resiliency
(Adapted from Skovholt, 2012)

- Recognizing that making one’s own needs a priority is essential in the ability to care for others.
- Creating everyday habits and routines that help to replenish one’s vigor.
- Taking pride in having a positive impact on the lives of others.
- Setting boundaries.
- Widening one’s definition of success to include small but meaningful accomplishments.
- Advocating for a hospitable work environment that allows for growth both professionally and personally.
- Protecting oneself from unhealthy relationships that extract more energy than they return.
- Becoming more self-aware through personal counseling and continuing education.
- Taking a timeout from the often seriousness of work.
Indivisible Self Model of Wellness

- Comprised of 17 factors divided into five categories of wellness
  - Physical Self
  - Social Self
  - Essential Self
  - Coping Self
  - Creative Self
Physical Self

- The most thought of in terms of wellness
- Two components:
  - Exercise
    - Engaging in physical activity in order to better one’s physical health
  - Nutrition
    - Maintaining a balanced diet in order to better one’s physical health
Social Self

• Having a “social life” is important to one’s health!
  • Love
    • Relationships characterized by intimacy, trust, and self-disclosure. Distinguished by a familial, marital, or sexual commitment
  • Friendship
    • Connections and relationships with others, but that do not hold a familial, marital, or sexual commitment
Essential Self

- Making meaning out of life, relationships, and self.
  - Spirituality
    - Practicing personal beliefs and behaviors in an effort to recognize the world beyond one’s self.
    - Not to be confused with religious practice.
  - Self-Care
    - Actively taking responsibility for the betterment of one’s self by completing tasks and routines to ensure positive wellness.
- Gender Identity
  - Satisfaction and recognition of one’s own gender.
- Cultural Identity
  - Satisfaction and recognition of one’s own culture.
Coping Self

- Regulation of one's responses to life's events and the ability to rise above negative stresses.
  - Realistic Beliefs
    - Recognizing impossible goals and being satisfied in one's own imperfection.
  - Stress Management
    - Remaining in tune to one's own stress level and taking steps to reduce stress when needed.
  - Self-Worth
    - Valuing one's self despite mistakes and noted flaws.
  - Leisure
    - Activities or interests that one participates in during free time.
Creative Self

• Creativity and imagination help us to overcome obstacles.
  • Thinking
    • Maintaining a mentally active lifestyle by properly considering multiple perspectives and embracing a curious approach to learning.
  • Emotions
    • Experiencing and expressing one’s feelings appropriately.
  • Control
    • Believing in one’s self and properly expressing needs to others.
  • Positive Humor
    • Utilizing humor to accomplish tasks and goals, as well as being able to take life’s complications and mistakes light-heartedly.
  • Work
    • Satisfaction in one’s career, jobs, chores, and routine tasks.
Purposeful Wellness

• As mentioned, many of these factors you already do regularly
  • Watching TV, working out, playing video games, spending time with loved ones

• Changing your mindset about wellness
  • Instead of just casually doing something without thought, be mindful and tell yourself this is for your wellness

• Challenging yourself to try new experiences
  • Routines, while supportive, can also cause us to forget about wellness benefits
Questions?

- Feel free to email me at brett.gleason@unlv.edu
References


