Self-Care and Stress Reduction for Mental Health

Saleena Gupte, DrPH, CCH, CHC
Integrated Care Consultant & Trainer
Alameda Health Consortium/Community Health Center Network
Integrative Medicine Homeopath and Holistic Behavioral Health Coach

May 22, 2020
No faculty/presenters, planners, including CME committee members, have relative financial relationships with commercial interests.

The Community Health Center Network is accredited by California Medical Association (CMA) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

CHCN designates this live activity for a maximum of 1 (one) AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™.

Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.
Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the importance of self-care and burnout prevention for care managers
2. Identify one practical self-management tool to help assist clients and yourself during current times
Plan for Our Time Together

• Why Self-Care Now?

• Self Care Practices:
  • Breath, Sleep, Body- Acupressure, Environment

• Stress Reduction Strategies
  • Compassion, Centering, Coping

• Daily Check-in

• Q & A

• Future Trainings
Why Do We Need Self-Care Now?
An Initiative of Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

1st Wave
Immediate mortality and morbidity of COVID-19

2nd Wave
Impact of resource restriction on urgent non-COVID conditions

3rd Wave
Impact of interrupted care on chronic conditions

4th Wave
- Psychic trauma
- Mental illness
- Economic injury
- Burnout

Healthcare Leadership: https://hcldr.wordpress.com/2020/04/07/the-pandemics-4th-wave/; Victor Tseng graphic
Self-Care is Client Care

• Stress and trauma can be disorganizing
• Burnout and vicarious trauma are real
• Self-care is essential at all times
• Our attitude and how we care for ourselves, affect how other people feel about themselves – Loving care is contagious
Effects of Stress

Clinical Action
Stress, Inflammation, Depression & Self Medication

INFLAMMATION & IMPACT ON OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

DEPRESSION
ANXIETY
FEAR
PANIC
DISTRESS

PAIN

SELF-MEDICATION

Korn LE. 2018 Integrative Mental Health PESI; www.pesi.org
Self-Care & Stress Reduction

Goal: **parasympathetic nervous system calming**
- Slows down the release of cortisol and the after-effects of physical and emotional distress

Focus on the **vagus nerve**
- Connection between brain through the neck, torso, and gut
- A symphony conductor that directs how fast/slow or loud/quiet your nervous system will be
- Branches out to many body parts to keep all functions in check: e.g. breathing, heart rate, digestion, inflammation, emotions, connections with others, strength to handle stress
Core Values of Self-Care
Self-Care Practices
We Can Connect to Our Self Through BREATH, REST, & CALM

4...1...5 breathing

• Breathe in for 4 counts
• Hold for 1 count
• Breathe out for 5 counts

WHY DO WE NEED RESTFUL SLEEP?

- Helps with Mood Stabilization & Calming
- Improves Memory & Brain Function
- Relieves Muscle Tension & Pain
- Lowers Blood Pressure & Good for the Heart
- Reduces Stress
- Helps Fight Infections & Reduces Inflammation
- Energy & more mental alertness

Center for Human Sleep Science, University California, Berkeley: https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-unit/center-human-sleep-science.
HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

MINI - QUIZ

Center for Human Sleep Science, UC Berkeley: https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-unit/center-human-sleep-science.
Edinger JD. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia Treatment Manual. 2018. VA & DUKE University Medical Centers, NC, USA
1. What are the best uses of the bed to promote sleep?

A. Working on a computer
B. Reading
C. Sleep
D. Sex/Intimacy
E. Talking on your phone or video-chatting
1. What are the best uses of the bed to promote sleep?

A. Working on a computer

B. Reading

C. Sleep

D. Sex/Intimacy

E. Talking on your phone or video-chatting

Try to limit activities in bed to only sleep and sex so that your body only associates itself to these things.
2. If you are not able to fall asleep, what is the recommended time limit to get up and out of bed?

A. 20 minutes
B. 30 minutes
C. 45 minutes
D. 5 minutes
E. 1 hour
2. If you are not able to fall asleep, what is the recommended time limit to get up and out of bed?

A. 20 minutes

B. 30 minutes

C. 45 minutes

D. 5 minutes

E. 1 hour

SLEEP ONLY WHEN SLEEPY

If you can’t fall asleep within 20 minutes of laying down get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy and try again.
3. How long before bedtime should physical movement be completed to get the best sleep?

A. 6 hours

B. 3 hours

C. 30 minutes

D. 1 hour
3. How long before bedtime should physical movement be completed to get the best sleep?

A. 6 hours

B. 3 hours

C. 30 minutes

D. 1 hour

BUILD IN SOME PHYSICAL MOVEMENT EVERY DAY

Exercising in the morning or early afternoon can help with sleep.

Avoid exercising or strenuous activities within 3 hours of your regular bed time
4. What is a natural hormone that helps to regulate sleep/wake time?

A. Cholesterol
B. Cortisol
C. Insulin
D. Melatonin
E. Serotonin
4. What is a natural hormone that helps to regulate sleep/wake time?

A. Cholesterol
B. Cortisol
C. Insulin
D. **Melatonin**
E. Serotonin

**BED TIME & WAKE TIME ROUTINE**

Set up a regular time to “train” your body into a circadian rhythm

*Tip*: when you wake up, turn your face towards light or the sun. The bright light helps your body **start to produce natural melatonin**

**LIMIT SCREEN TIME**

Tablets, smartphones, tv, and other electronic devices have short waves of blue light that delay your body’s internal clock, ability to fall asleep, and **suppresses melatonin**.

*Tip*: limit stimulating activities to at least one (1) hour before bedtime
5. What is a stimulant that affects getting good restorative sleep?

A. Nicotine/Tobacco
B. Caffeine
C. Sugar
D. Alcohol
5. What is a stimulant that affects getting good restorative sleep?

A. Nicotine/Tobacco

B. Caffeine

C. Sugar

D. Alcohol

**EFFECTS ON DEEP RESTORATIVE (REM) SLEEP**

Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants
As alcohol metabolizes, it interferes with deep sleep
Sugar interferes with falling asleep

Avoid these at least 3-4 hours before bedtime
CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SLEEP

- Reduce light in your sleeping area.
- Use a black out shade or wear an eye mask.
- Turn electronics off or turn away from your bed.
- A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is recommended.
- Wear earplugs or use a ‘white noise’ machine.

CREATE A SLEEP RITUAL

- Read.
- Calming Music.
- Shower or bath.
- Meditation or deep breathing.
- Massage your feet.
- Drink herbal tea (e.g. chamomile tea).
**Self-Care: Acupressure**

- Roots in Traditional Chinese Medicine
- When the body is chronically tense, the muscle fibers contract and create blockages along channels in the body – known as meridians
- Blockages along any of the meridians can lead to pain, discomfort, illness, emotional disturbances
- *Core Philosophy:* we can create powerful health effects by stimulating and massaging certain points to “turn on” our body’s own self healing
Acupressure Points for Stress Reduction (1)

Letting Go

• Relieves repressed emotions, worry, sadness, shallow breathing, chest congestion, coughing, asthma

• **Location:** On the outer part of the upper chest- four finger widths up from the armpit crease and one finger width to the interior

  • Gently massage this point in a circular motion with both your forefinger and middle finger

  • Apply pressure for 30 seconds, release, and repeat for a total of 3-5 minutes each time
Acupressure Points for Stress Reduction (2)

Labour Palace

• To ease symptoms of fatigue and restlessness that often accompany stress

• **Location:** Where the tip of your middle finger touches your palm

• Use the tip of your other thumb to massage this point in a circular motion for 30 seconds, release, and repeat, for a total 3-5 minutes each time

https://buddingoptimist.com/acupressure-points-for-anxiety/
Acupressure Points for Stress Reduction (3)

Great Surge

One of the best acupressure points for reducing stress and anxiety. Also the go-to point for detoxifying the body and cleansing the liver.

**Location:** between your big toe and second toe, where the connective tissues are just before the large foot bone.

- Gently massage this area with your thumb in a circular motion for 30 seconds
- Then with the tip of your thumb, push out from this point away from your body. Imagine you’re expelling toxins out of your body when you do this.
- Repeat the above steps for a total of 3-5 minutes

https://buddingoptimist.com/acupressure-points-for-anxiety/
Environment: Creating a Healing Home and Work Space

Elements of place which can lead to...

**NOISE**
**LIGHT**
**TEMPERATURE**
**HUMIDITY**
**CROWDING**
**ODORS**

**STRESS**

**SOUND**
**NATURAL LIGHT**
**TEMPERATURE**
**HUMIDITY**
**VIEWS OF NATURE**
**FRAGRANCE**

University of Arizona Institute on Place, Wellbeing, and Performance: https://ipwp.arizona.edu/
CALMING & HEALING ELEMENTS OF PLACE

TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, VENTILATION WHAT YOU FEEL

Ideal temp: (20–22 °C) 68–72 °F
Ideal humidity: 40 -50%

SOUNDS WHAT YOU HEAR

VIEWS OF NATURE WHAT YOU SEE

FRAGRANCE WHAT YOU SMELL

NATURAL LIGHT
Stress Reduction Strategies and Tools

3 C’s
We acknowledge that we are in the midst of unprecedented times.

We acknowledge that we are each holding a multitude of feelings, responsibilities, fear, and joys - at the same time.

We acknowledge that there are many responses to stress and uncertainty - each of them valid.

We acknowledge that there is no better opportunity to practice compassion and collective care than right now. This is the work.

We acknowledge the critical need for reflection, inquiry and prioritization of the most critical needs.

Compassion

• Activates the vagus nerve and tolerate distress
• Helps us identify needs in ourselves and others
• Moves us to take action
• Communities that practice compassion thrive
• Strengthens our circle of care
• Compassionate leadership supports work-life balance

Self-Compassion & Self-Care Tool
Boundaries

• Create moments for yourself
• Ask for your own sheltered time
• Structure your time; create a routine
• Take a news break
• Do something kind for yourself
Compassion Tool: Gratitude

• Gratitude = the feeling we have towards something that we hold in high regard
• Sharing gratitude
• Helps with our immune systems, cardiovascular function, relationships, well-being, sleep, calm, stress management, resilience, and more

Gratitude builds strong communities

What are you grateful for?

https://news.berkeley.edu/
https://gsc.berkeley.edu/
Centering into Acceptance

• Practice of bringing oneself into balance

• Paying attention to internal cues and emotions

• How is stress showing up in your body?

• Accepting what is true in the moment
  • Accepting the present without an intense desire to change it
Centering to Accept Distress
Stress Reduction Tool

**STEP 1: WATCH AND OBSERVE**
Act like a third person outside of yourself. Pay attention to whatever you are feeling in the present moment. Pay close attention to the sensations in your body, or what your body is doing to give you clues about how you are feeling.

You are not your emotions, you are the watcher of your emotions

**STEP 2: LABEL THE EMOTION OR GIVE IT AN IMAGE**
You may say to yourself...
“ I am feeling fear, I can feel my heart beating fast” or “I am angry, I feel tightness in my jaw
or
“I feel like a wave in the ocean, my emotions rise and fall through the day”

Based on your observation, name the emotion you are feeling or an image it brings to mind.

**STEP 3: HOLD CURiosity & NON-JUDGMENT**
Try not to judge what you feel as good or bad.
Your feeling is what it is. You do not have to act on it or do anything with it.

Centre for clinical interventions (2020, march 21). tolerating distress.
Coping with Resilience

- Find a way to turn feelings into a new action
- Support emotional expression
- Reach out for Help when needed
### Coping Stress Reduction Tools

#### Self-Soothing
(Comforting yourself through your five senses)
1. Something to touch
   (ex: stuffed animal, stress ball)
2. Something to hear
   (ex: music, meditation guides)
3. Something to see
   (ex: snowglobe, happy pictures)
4. Something to taste
   (ex: mints, tea, sour candy)
5. Something to smell
   (ex: lotion, candles, perfume)

#### Distraction
(Taking your mind off the problem for a while)
- **Examples:**
  - Puzzles, books, artwork, crafts, knitting, crocheting, sewing, crossword puzzles, sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.

#### Opposite Action
(Doing something the opposite of your impulse that’s consistent with a more positive emotion)
1. **Affirmations and Inspiration**
   (ex: looking at or drawing motivational statements or images)
2. **Something funny or cheering**
   (ex: funny movies / TV / books)

#### Emotional Awareness
(Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings)
- **Examples:**
  - A list or chart of emotions, a journal, writing supplies, drawing / art supplies

#### Mindfulness
(Tools for centering and grounding yourself in the present moment)
- **Examples:**
  - Meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (like a rock or paperweight), yoga mat, breathing exercises.

#### Crisis Plan
(Contact info of supports and resources, for when coping skills aren’t enough.)
- **Family / Friends Therapist**
- **Psychiatrist**
- **Hotline**
- **Crisis Team / ER**
- **911**

---

**References:**


---

In Summary...

- Self-care first, before other care
- Importance of self-care for burnout prevention
- Self care skills
  - 4-1-5 breathing and grounding
  - Healthy Sleep Habits
  - Acupressure points
  - Creating a calm and healing space
- Stress Reduction Strategies: 3 C’s
  - Compassion: Self Compassion & Boundaries; Gratitude
  - Centering: Acceptance; 3 step method to recognize emotions & reduce distress
  - Coping Tools that build resilience
- Self Care and Stress Reduction Daily Check-in
What Types of Self-Care Did You do Today?

P.E.S.S Method

Physical: Sleep, Stretching, Walking, Physical release, Healthy food, Yoga, Rest

Emotional: Stress management, Emotional maturity, Forgiveness, Compassion, Kindness

Social: Boundaries, Support systems, Positive social media, Communication, Time together, Ask for help

Spiritual: Time alone, Meditation, Yoga, Connection, Nature, Journaling, Sacred space
Thank You!!!
Coordination and online platform support provided by:

AC Care Connect Skills Development Unit

For more information on future trainings and supportive resources, find us on Groupsite:

accareconnect.groupsite.com