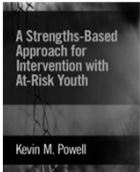


PREVENTING BURNOUT in Human Services Work

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What will be covered:

- 1) Indicators of Burnout in Mental Health Providers
- 2) Preventing Burnout in Human Services Work
 - A) PERSONAL Strategies
 - B) PROFESSIONAL Strategies
- 3) Conclusion



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PREVENTING BURNOUT IN HUMAN SERVICES WORK

Working in human services as a Therapist, Counselor, case manager, etc., can be a rewarding profession but also stressful at times. Working with children, adolescents, adults, and families who are struggling in life can be challenging and increase the risk of "burning out." If we do not take good care of ourselves, both personally and professionally, we may find it difficult to continue in this field.

Below are strategies for how to prevent burnout and create a professional and personal life in which human service workers can thrive. The information is organized in a way that you can use it in your own life as you see fit.

PERSONAL Strategies for Preventing Burnout:

1) MAINTAIN A BALANCED LIFE

Make time for Sleep, Healthy Diet, Physical Exercise, Mind-body practices, Vacations, and Fun!

2) BE RESPONSIVE TO YOUR NEEDS AS AN INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT

If you are introverted and get your energy from alone time, make time for it. If you are extroverted and get your energy from social interactions, make time for it.

3) SCHEDULE TIME FOR ACTIVITIES THAT ARE RELAXING, MAKE YOU HAPPY, AND/OR EXPRESS YOUR PASSION (e.g., meeting on the couch watching Netflix and eating popcorn)

4) DEVELOP PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES & STRATEGIES LINKED TO WELL-BEING & EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

• **Emotional:** Friendly, sociable, emotionally expressive

• **Positive Outlook:** Optimistic, energetic, confident

• **Optimism:** Possessing generalized favorable expectations for your future

• **Low Risk-Taking:** Not easily discouraged or discouraged, low vulnerability, isolation, & avoidance

• **Intellectual Curiosity:** Open to new ideas, enjoy thinking deeply, reflect a lot on their experiences

• **Interdependence:** Acknowledgment of self and others, efficient, competent

• **Cognitive Resilience:** Reframing a situation in a way that reduces emotional distress

• **Compassion:** Feel and care about others' emotions and experiences

5) UTILIZE HUMOR AND LAUGHTER

Use humor that is affirming and accepting human that fosters relationships and self-supporting. Humor is fun and makes life feel not as stressful or stressful. No sarcasm, put-down humor.

6) EMBRACE THE FACT THAT WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES

• No one is perfect

• Remember yourself that mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow (personally & professionally)

• Model for clients how to take personal responsibility for your mistakes

7) MEET YOUR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (Physiological, Safety, Social, Competency Needs)

8) SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY PEOPLE

Foster relationships with stable, honest, supportive people, while setting limits with people who are not.

9) ADDRESS YOUR OWN PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLES

Access support and therapeutic services to address past and present adversity/trauma (as needed).

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HANDOUT:

Preventing Burnout in Human Services Work
at kevinpowellphd.com
under the Resource tab

Both PERSONAL and PROFESSIONAL Burnout Prevention Strategies are essential.

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1) Indicators of BURNOUT for Mental Health Providers

40%

1) **Emotional Exhaustion**- Feeling fatigued & overextended, depleted of emotional & physical resources (Over-worked)

22%

2) **Depersonalization**- A negative and cynical attitude towards people (colleagues & clients)

19%

3) **Diminished Sense of Personal Accomplishment**- Negative self-evaluation & minimization of work accomplishments

2018 Meta-Analysis of Burnout in MH Professionals (including studies from 33 different countries) found...

O'Connor, Muller, Neff, & Pitman, 2018

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2) Preventing Burnout in Human Services Work

A) PERSONAL STRATEGIES for Preventing Burnout

1) Maintain a 'Balanced Life'

Make time for Sleep, Healthy Diet, Physical Exercise, Mind-body practices, Vacations, and Fun!



Do your best to maintain a healthy balance between of your professional work and personal life.

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Allow time for:

SBI #39 Chap 14

*Sleep

*Physical Exercise (walk, jog, swim, lift weights, yoga, aerobics, etc.)

*Healthy Eating & Drinking

*Family time

*Social/ Friend time

*Alone time (especially individuals who are more introverted)

*Spiritual time

*Vacation time


*Hobbies & Pursuing your passions, life goals, etc.

*Mental Health needs



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Good SELF CARE → **Effective Staff** who are emotionally available to clients and are at lower risk of “Burn Out”

Poor Self Care → **Ineffective Staff** who are impatient, irritable, and pessimistic and at high risk of “Burn Out”

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2) Be Responsive to Your Needs as an ‘Introvert’ or ‘Extrovert’

If you are INTROVERTED and get your energy from alone time...make time for it.


If you are EXTROVERTED and get your energy from social interactions...make time for it.

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EXERCISE: Thinking about SELF CARE

HANDOUT: **SBI #39**
Thinking about Self-Care
 Pg. 169-170 & 193-195



THINKING ABOUT SELF-CARE

Identify Activities/ Situations...

- *When you feel most **RELAXED & STRESS-FREE**
- *When you feel most **HAPPY**
(when you laugh, have fun, feel energized, satisfied)
- *When you feel most **HEALTHY**
(‘physically’, ‘emotionally’, ‘socially’, ‘intellectually’, ‘spirituality’, etc.)

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3) Schedule Time for ‘Activities that are Relaxing, Make You Happy, and/or Express Your Passion’

e.g., relaxing on the couch watching college football and eating NACHOS!!



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4) Develop ‘Personality Attributes & Strategies’ associated with ‘Well-being & Emotional Resilience’

e.g., Anglim et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2018

***Enthusiasm** - Friendly, sociable, emotionally expressive

***Positive Affectivity** - Happy, energetic, confident

***Optimism** - Possessing generalized favorable expectancies for your future

***Low Withdrawal** - Not easily discouraged or overwhelmed;
Low rumination, isolation, & avoidance



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***Intellectual Curiosity** - Open to new ideas, enjoy thinking deeply, reflect a lot on their experiences

***Industriousness** - Achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, efficient, competent



***Cognitive Reappraisal** - Rethinking a situation in a way that reduces emotional distress

***Compassion** - Feel and care about others’ emotions and well-being

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Character Trait Checklist (with the antitheses of each character trait listed in parentheses)

SBI #30 pp.182-184

Character Checklist

Introduction
Our character helps determine how we behave in the world. The purpose of this checklist is to get you thinking about the character qualities that will help you lead a positive, prosocial life. Listed below are several character traits and descriptions of each one. The opposite of each character trait is listed in parentheses and can help you identify problem areas you can improve on.

Instructions

- Complete this checklist with the help of your counselor and/or family members. Mark a T (true) next to each character quality that is already strong within you and that you regularly demonstrate in your day-to-day life. Check a F (falsified) next to each character quality you think you could get better at if you worked on it.
- Look at the opposite of each character quality (listed in parentheses) to help identify problem areas that you can improve on with the corresponding character quality.
- Specific questions to explore: Which of these character qualities best describes you? Which of the opposites (in parentheses) are problem areas for you? When you think of the people in your life who have had the most positive influence on you, what character qualities best describe them? What are some examples in your life when you have demonstrated respect, kindness, gratitude, etc.?

Character Traits (Antitheses in parentheses):

- Respectfulness (versus disrespectfulness)**
 - Following the Golden Rule: Treating others how you wish to be treated, even when they are not giving you the same courtesy
 - Being polite and courteous (e.g., saying please and thank you)
- Kindness/Compassion (versus uncaring/selfishness)**
 - Thinking of others needs, not just your own
 - Being sensitive to others' feelings and needs
 - Helping out others
- Persistence (versus giving up easily)**
 - Being able to stick to a goal or complete a task despite difficulties
 - The ability to delay gratification
 - Having a passion for long-term goals that you are able to keep in focus and work hard to achieve
 - Not getting discouraged and giving up when faced with disappointments or setbacks

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7) Meet Your 'BASIC HUMAN NEEDS' **SBI #21**

Meet Basic Human Needs to promote motivation, prosocial actions, human well-being, AND reduce risk of Burnout

Biglan et al., 2012; Kaufman, 2018; Kenrick et al., 2010; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018

Basic Human Needs

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Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow, 1970)

Maslow believed that humans are motivated to fulfill their unmet needs beginning with the most basic needs

Need to live up to one's fullest potential

Esteem/Achievement Needs
(Competency Needs)

Belongingness & Love Needs
(Social Needs)

Safety Needs
(Physical & Psychological Safety)

Physiological Needs

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***Important Questions to regularly ask about yourself**

?!?

- *What is motivating me?
- *What needs are unmet for me?
- *How can I help meet my unmet needs?

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8) Surround Yourself with Psychologically Healthy People

Nurture your Relationships with Stable, Honest, Supportive people...

↓

And Setting Limits with people who are NOT

Be streetwise with people who are not psychologically stable... sometimes you need to 'Love them from a distance'

9) Address your Own Psychological Struggles

Access support and therapeutic services to address past and present adversity/ stressors (as needed).

Maintain your Resilience!

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B) PROFESSIONAL STRATEGIES for Preventing Burnout

10) Utilize 'Healthy Compartmentalization'
Maintain a clear boundary between your Work Life & Home Life

Allow yourself to take breaks from work... physically, mentally & emotionally

Maintain a present-moment focus when doing leisure activities.

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11) Identify and Learn from *Positive, Competent Coworkers*

Be a sponge and learn as much as you can from competent co-workers who freely share their knowledge

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12) Participate in 'Competent, Strengths-Based Supervision'



HANDOUT:
Guidelines for Strengths-Based Supervisors at kevinpowellphd.com under the Resource tab

*All Leaders & Supervisors must model the strengths-based, relationship-based attributes of the organization. **WALK YOUR TALK!** (Power of Modeling/ Social Learning)*

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13) Create a Supportive, Collaborative, Non-Competitive Work Environment (Healthy Team)

SBI #40

a) Healthy TEAM= HIRE & PROMOTE SMART

Hire staff with good Character Strengths...

- *Positive, Optimistic, Strengths-Based attitude
- *Relationship-based orientation
-
- *Humble
- *Open to learning from others
- *Team player
-
- *Honesty and Integrity
- *Good Boundaries
- *Strong Work Ethic
- *Good Emotional Regulation

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Empower your 'Best Staff'- Identify 'Best Staff' at all levels of the organization and assign them to Positions of Influence

- a) 'Best Staff' = who possess Healthy Character Strengths: Positive, Team player; Good Work Ethic; etc.
- b) Assign these identified 'best staff' to FTO (Field Training Orientation) positions. Require 'new hires' to shadow these FTO staff as part of their initial orientation
- c) Assign 'best staff' to 'Champion' important components of youth services...it can empower them and help them to further develop professionally and promote.

This can help reduce the risk of '*Diffusion of Responsibility*'

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b) Healthy TEAM= Be Strengths-Based with Colleagues

SBI #40

- *Regularly Check-in with each other
-
- *Recognize each others' Strengths. Have a set **AGENDA ITEM** at team meetings titled, "POSITIVES" ("Snaps"; *What is going well?*)
-
- *Help each Other to Get Better as Staff
(e.g., 10-minute toolbox)

We are all better as a TEAM!!

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Promote a Collaborative Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT)

Empower Youth, Families and Staff to actively participate in the MDT, to help make informed decisions that will meet individualized needs and lead to more effective interventions

It Takes A Village!

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c) **Healthy Team=** Five Psychologically Healthy Workplace Practices Grawitch et al., 2014

Health & Safety

- *Safe Workplace
- *Psychological Health- EAP Services
- *Physical Health

Employee Involvement

- *Greater autonomy & control over work demands
- *Increased ownership for Services (Assign “Champions”)

Work-Life Balance

- *Greater control of work & non-work life
- *Greater resources available (vacation time; childcare benefits)

Employee Growth & Development

- *Improved stress management skills
- *Improved job skills and adaptability (career resilience)

Employee Recognition *Positive Recognition & Promotions

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14) **Maintain a Strength-based, Solution-focused Approach**

Chronic Negativity and Deficit-Based thinking and complaining is TOXIC to self and others.

Focusing on Strengths, Solutions, and Exceptions to problems ('what is right' with clients and co-workers)



Essential for competent and effective Human Services

And can energize Providers (& Clients)
AND Reduce the risk of Burnout

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15) **Be Cognizant of PROTECTIVE FACTORS linked to Healthy Work Life** O'Connor, Muller Neff, & Pitman, 2018

- *Role Clarity
- *Sense of Professional Autonomy (perceived capacity to influence decisions at work)
- *Sense of Being Treated Fairly
- *Manageable Caseloads
- *Development of Good Team Functioning (Team Players)
- *Providing Quality Clinical Supervision

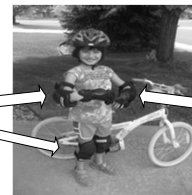
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Metaphor for Resilience Protective Factors: Learning to Ride a Bike or Skateboard

Chap 5 & SBI #20

Protective Factors



Protective Factors

We need to help youth (and their family) identify the Protective Factors (Pads, Helmets, & Backpack Harnesses) in their Life.

What will help buffer life's stressors?

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Characteristics (Protective Factors) commonly associated with Resilient Youth & Adults

(from Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009; Masten & Reed, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; and other studies cited below)



HANDOUT:
Resilience Protective Factors Checklist-Clinical Version (RPFC-CLIN) at kevinpowellphd.com under the Resource tab

Encourage staff to explore their own Protective Factors linked to Resilience

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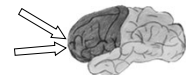
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16) **Maintain 'Hope' about Clients Capacity to make Positive Life Changes**

Many Developmental & Statistical reasons for Hope... SBI #3

a) The Brain's Prefrontal Cortex (executive functioning) is still Maturing into early adulthood



b) The Brain is very responsive to experience due to NEUROPLASTICITY (can wire the brain in positive ways)





Bryck & Fisher, 2012; Davidson & McEwen, 2012; Mackey, Whitaker, & Bunge, 2012; Tabibnia & Radecki, 2018; Winerman, 2012; Woollett & Maguire, 2011

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“Mountain Path” Metaphor:
Understanding NEUROPLASTICITY SBI #3, pg. 79-83





“Use it or lose it” & “Use it and improve it”

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c) We gain Knowledge/ Wisdom through exploration & experience (Life-Span Wisdom Model)
Romer, Reyna, & Satterthwaite 2017



We help people Gain Wisdom by...

**Reinforcing their Prosocial Actions
&
Modeling Prosocial Actions
&
Providing Feedback and Logical Consequences for Problematic Actions**

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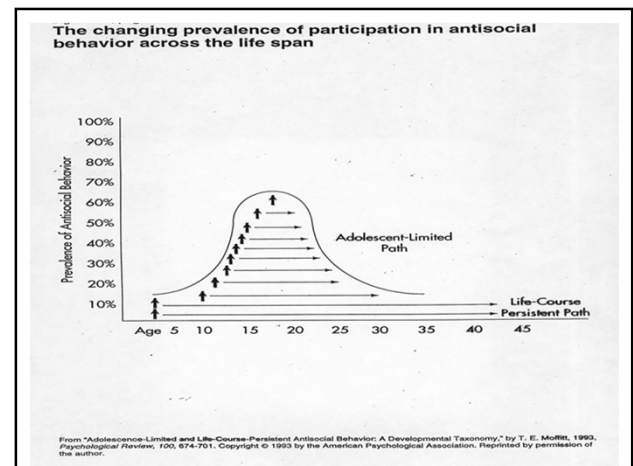
d) Reason for HOPE: The Lifespan Prevalence Rate for Delinquent Behaviors is Low

Delinquent behavior peaks in mid adolescence and dramatically decreases in late adolescence/ young adulthood.

Caspi & Moffitt, 1998; Farrington, 2007; Loeber et al., 2012; Moffitt, 1993, 1997, 2007; Steinberg et al., 2015; Van Domburgh et al., 2009; Walters, 2011

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Why is Promoting HOPE & SELF-EFFICACY so Important? SBI #7

Self-Efficacy is good for clients and providers. Believing you have some PERSONAL CONTROL in your life (“Self-efficacy”; “Internal Locus of Control”; “Growth Mindset”) leads to many Positive Outcomes including...

- *Better Academic Achievement
- *Better Physical Health
- *Better Interpersonal Skills
- *Better Relationships
- *Better Mental Health Adjustment (higher self-esteem, less psychological distress, less depression)
- *More Resilient when faced with life stressors

Burnette et al., 2022; Dweck, 2008; Lachman & Weaver, 1998; Tangney et al., 2004; Yeager & Dweck, 2020

Much better outcomes than people who struggle with ‘learned hopelessness’, ‘non-caring attitude’, & ‘fixed mindsets’.

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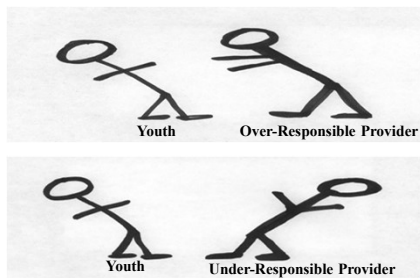
18) Be a Life-Long Learner
Human behavior is complex, and no one has all the answers, so keep pursuing new information & ideas

19) Maintain Realistic Expectations & Goals for Clients
Permanent change does not happen overnight. Do not give up when clients are slow to make changes.

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21) Avoid Becoming Over or Under Responsible for a client's treatment progress.



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SELF-CARE STRATEGIES (5 categories)

Collins & Cassill, 2021; Rupert & Dorociak, 2019

- 1) **Professional Support** (supportive relationships with colleagues)
 - *Treated fairly & receive fair recognition & compensation for your work
- 2) **Professional Development** (opportunities for professional growth)
 - *Receive regular clinical supervision
 - *Involvement in professional organizations/events
 - *Sense of autonomy
 - *Perceived capacity to influence decisions at work
- 3) **Life Balance** (allowing time for relationships/ activities outside of work)
 - *Time with family & friends
 - *Alone time
 - *Physical exercise and healthy eating
 - *Adequate sleep
 - *Leisure activities/ hobbies
- 4) **Daily Balance** (managing daily workplace demands)
 - *Taking breaks (time for yourself) between sessions & meetings
 - *Delegating/ empowering others

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5) **Cognitive Awareness** (monitoring workplace stress & reactions)

- *Reflecting on positive experiences
- *Monitoring your stress level (identifying when you need a MH day)
- *Maintaining a sense of humor
- *Healthy Compartmentalization- Taking a break from the stressors of work, not only *physically* but also *mentally & emotionally*.

Keep In Mind...

Self-Care is DIVERSE (Not the Same for Everyone)

It includes many different practices and will vary from person-to-person based on their personal preferences and life situations.

Self-Care should be practiced PROACTIVELY:

Self-Care works most effective when practiced on an ongoing basis...so don't wait until you are already Burning Out!

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3) Conclusion

Kevin's Core Principles for Effective Human Services

- Strengths-Based
- Relationship-Based
- Solution-Focused & Skills-Based
- Ecologically-Based
- Balanced, Holistic, & Individualized
- Adherence to Evidence-Based *Principles*



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? Comments, Questions?

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