

Intern Self-Care:


The importance of self-care to sustain longevity within the profession of health service psychology

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Learning Objectives

1. Participants will be able to list 2 ethical principles that address the importance of maintaining one's own physical and mental health in service of being a competent psychologist.
 2. Participants will be able to identify 3-4 strategies to help prevent and/or manage symptoms of burnout, secondary traumatization, and/or compassion fatigue.
 3. Participants will be able to describe 3-4 methods of teaching self-care to interns that incorporate various cultural perspectives.
 4. Participants will create a self-care plan to utilize themselves as professional role models.
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Self-Care: A Quiz



T or F The term *self-care* originated with the 12-step self-help movement.

T or F Self-care does not include routine positive practices and mindful attention to one's physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual selves in the context of one's personal and professional lives.

T or F Self-care has been described as consisting of three completely unrelated factors: self-awareness, self-regulation, and balance.

Wise, E. H., & Barnett, J. E. (2016)

Self-Care: A Quiz

- T or F The goal of self-care is functioning somewhat well, over time and in the face of professional and personal stressors.
- T or F Self-care may involve a wide range of activities that will vary across individuals, but in general they are positive actions that promote wellness and effective coping.
- T or F Effective self-care ignores negative coping behaviors that will not likely exacerbate one's difficulties over time.



Self-Care Self-Assessment

Rate each of the 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



Psychology Student Stress and Burnout

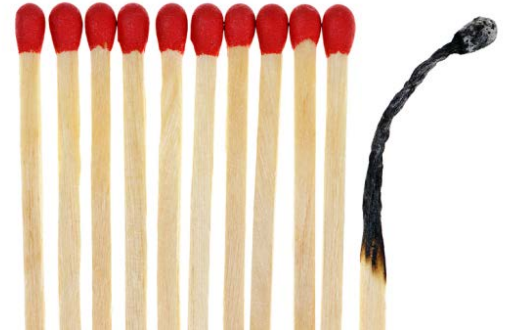
Stress and burnout among psychology graduate students can have a negative impact on their ability to provide adequate clinical care. (Pakenham, K.I., 2015)



Psychology Student Stress and Burnout

There have been inconsistencies regarding gender differences with some research suggesting that female students endorse higher levels of stress than male students and other studies noting no gender differences.

Students who identify as an ethnic minority face additional and unique stressors compared with students who identify with the majority ethnic group.



Ethical Imperative?

Ethical:

- pertaining to or dealing with morals or the principles of morality; pertaining to right and wrong in conduct
- being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, esp. the standards of a profession

Imperative:

(as adjective)

- absolutely necessary or required; unavoidable
- of the nature of or expressing a command; commanding

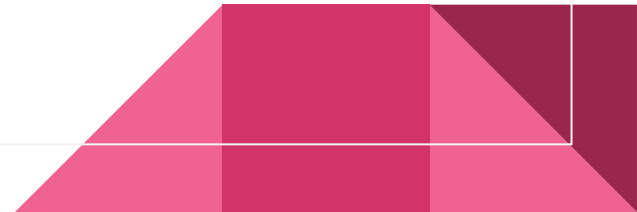
(as noun)

- a command; something that demands attention or action; an unavoidable obligation or requirement; necessity




Should Self-Care Be an Ethical Imperative?

Review of the psychologist-impairment literature highlights that psychological practice can be stressful and that practitioners are vulnerable to elevated distress and burnout, leading to **impaired professional competence** (Parkenham, K.I., 2015)



Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology: Required Profession-Wide Competencies

1. Research
 2. Ethical and legal standards
 3. Individual and cultural diversity
 4. Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors
 5. Communication and interpersonal skills
 6. Assessment
 7. Intervention
 8. Supervision
 9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills
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General Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence

Psychologists strive to be aware of the possible effect of their own physical and mental health on their ability to help those with whom they work.



General Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility

Psychologists uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and seek to manage conflicts of interest that could lead to exploitation or harm.



General Principle C: Integrity

Psychologists strive to keep their promises and to avoid unwise or unclear commitments.



General Principle D: Justice

Psychologists exercise reasonable judgment and take precautions to ensure that their potential biases, the boundaries of their competence, and the limitations of their expertise do not lead to or condone unjust practices.




APA Ethics Code Section 2

In the enforceable sections of the code, **Section 2** contains the ethical standards that relate to competence

(Wise, E. H., Hersh, M. A., & Gibson, C. M., 2012)

Standard 1.04, Informal Resolution of Ethical Violations, states, “When psychologists believe that there may have been an ethical violation by another psychologist, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual”

(APA 2002, p. 1064)



APA Ethics Code Section 2 and 3

Standard 2.01, *Boundaries of Competence*

Standard 2.03, *Maintaining Competence*

Standard 2.06, *Personal Problems and Conflicts*

Standard 3.04, *Avoiding Harm*



American Psychological Association (2010)

Relationships and Boundaries

- Understand clinician's role in establishing therapeutic boundaries
- Respect the power differential
- Be aware of source of pressure to cross boundaries
- Characteristics of boundary violations
 - Reversal of roles
 - Client is in a double bind
 - Clinician has a hidden agenda
 - Clinician justifies the violation



Definition of Burnout

- The result of cumulative stress or psychological strain
- Results gradually, over time
- Erosion of idealism/hope
- Contributing factors
 - Internship experience
 - Empathic engagement with clients can be draining
 - Insufficient support &/or appreciation
 - Long work hours
 - Intense work pace and/or clientele
 - Insufficient clarity of role



(Figley, C.R.(Ed.) 1995)

Symptoms of Burnout

- Mood shifts: irritability, cynicism, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, apathy, depression, etc.
- Exhaustion: mental, physical and emotional
- Feel disillusioned, ineffective &/or incompetent at work
- Incompetent or ineffective work
- Overfunctioning &/or overcommitting
- Poor boundary setting with clients or others
- Overstepping boundaries with clients or others
- Clients' stories intruding into personal life



Vicarious Traumatization

- “A transformation of the helper’s inner experience resulting from empathic engagement with clients’ trauma material.” (Saakitne, K.W. & Pearlman, L.A., 1996)
- Our ability to empathically connect with clients is a risk factor
- We adapt to the trauma material of our clients based on our personal context
- Our views of the world change
- Intrusive thoughts and images of clients’ stories

American Counseling Association -

<https://www.counseling.org/docs/trauma-disaster/fact-sheet-9---vicarious-trauma.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



Personal Impact of Vicarious Traumatization

- Safety
 - Experience anxiety, fears, increased vigilance
 - Take actions to increase safety
- Trust
 - Doubt own judgement
 - View people as dangerous
- Esteem
 - Self doubt
 - Questions ability to help clients
- Intimacy
 - Withdraw from others
 - Dependency on others



(Trippany, R.L., White Kress, V.E., & Wilcoxon, S.A. 2004)

Impact of Vicarious Traumatization on Clinical Work

- Avoidance of trauma material
- Rescuing clients
- Poor boundaries with clients
- View self as incompetent
- View trauma work as ineffective
- Increased sensitivity regarding feedback



(Figley, C.R.(Ed.), 1995 and Trippany, R.L., White Kress, V.E., & Wilcoxon, S.A., 2004)

Protective Factors

- Resilience
 - Personal beliefs and hope
 - Seeing the goodness in people
 - Self awareness
 - Healthy boundaries
 - Community support
- Other roles
 - Personal pursuits
 - Community involvement



(Figley, C.R.(Ed.), 1995)

Strategies to Prevent and Manage Burnout and Vicarious Traumatization

- Establish and maintain boundaries
- Self-care basics
- Caseload balance
- Consultation and supervision
- Continuing education
- Create meaning
- Challenge negative assumptions
- Self-compassion



Self-Compassion

- Therapy involves empathy and compassion for the other
- To empathically attune with others self compassion is necessary
- “When the systems of your body, mind, and relationships become unstable, your brain produces uncomfortable signals of threat.”
- Cultivate self compassion
 - Mindfulness practice (ex: Loving Kindness)
 - Self awareness of thoughts and actions
 - Take in the good
 - Savor the positive experiences



(Hanson, R. 2009)

Longevity or Compassion Satisfaction

- Development of stronger sense of self, confidence, meaning, spiritual connection, and respect for human resiliency
- Work with trauma survivors can result in increased sense of meaning, increase purpose and heightened connection with others
- Professionals indicate keys to maintain longevity and satisfaction:
 - Take breaks
 - Seek mentoring, consultation, assistance
 - Enhance self care when noticing negative effects of trauma work
 - Attend to burn out and secondary traumatization

(Figley, C.R.(Ed.), 1995)



Career Sustaining Behaviors

Among 25 positive self-care or coping strategies psychologists use to maintain their well-being and professional well-functioning.

6 strategies that strengthen resources and foster resilience in the face of work demands were rated important or very important.

3 more internally cognitively focused:

Sense of Humor, Professional Identity/Values,
and Self-Awareness/Monitoring

3 more externally behaviorally focused:

Personal/Work-Life Balance, Engaging in Hobbies,
and Spending Time with Partner/ Significant Other(s)



(Rupert & Kent 2007)

Predictors of Career Satisfaction (Rupert, et.al. 2012)

Maintain sense of humor

Maintain self-awareness/self-monitoring*

Maintain balance between professional and personal lives*

Maintain professional identity/values*

Engage in hobbies*

Spend time with spouse/partner/family*

Cultivate a sense of control over work responsibilities*

Take regular vacations*

Engage in physical activities*

Spend time with friends

Maintain objectivity about clients

Reflect on satisfying work experiences*

Perceive clients' problems as interesting*

Vary work responsibilities*

Pursue professional development*

Discuss work frustrations/seek support from colleagues

Seek case consultation

Not feel sense of responsibility for clients' problems

Conscious effort to put aside thoughts of the clients outside of work

Discuss work frustrations with spouse/partner/family

Maintain regular contact with referral networks

Turn to spiritual beliefs/activities

Attend religious services/spiritual support group

Seek guidance from a spiritual teacher

*Significant predictors of Career Satisfaction

Resilience & Reconnection

The PII Change Model for Resilience-Oriented Stress Management

(Harrell, 2016)



- ❑ Resilience can reduce intensity & duration of stress response & facilitate bouncing back
- ❑ Protect against negative effects of future stressors
- ❑ Transform experiences of stress into thriving

(Harrell, S. 2015)

Teaching Self-Care

- ❑ Self-Care Self-Assessment and Wellness Plan
- ❑ Self-Care & Spiritual Awareness Professional Seminar
- ❑ Self-Care/ Self-Reflection “Retreat”
- ❑ Wellness Wednesdays
- ❑ Best Day/Worst Day Scrapbook Page




Teaching Self-Care

- ❑ “Weekend Highlights”
- ❑ “Spontaneous Gratitude”
- ❑ Personal Events Celebrations
- ❑ Ropes Course/Outdoor Activity
- ❑ “Pouring Picasso” Painting Class
- ❑ Lunchtime Yoga
- ❑ Other Strategies?



Teaching Self-Care (Brainstorming)

- Go outside whenever the weather permits
 - Do walking supervision
 - Plan end of the semester/year outing to go hiking in the local mountains
 - Teach interns Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
 - Share “best moments” from the last week
 - Have a Friday morning dance-off (1 song)
 - Potlucks and picnics
 - One campus offers National Park field trips for all staff as part of a workday
 - The 5:01, hangout after work on Fridays
 - Working crossword puzzles
 - Express thanks/affirmations at an “Appreciation Station”
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