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### Webinar Housekeeping Reminders

- This webinar is being recorded and will be shared with attendees as soon as it is processed (typically 48 hours)
- Handout of slides has been emailed to all attendees
- For Questions to our speakers please use the Q&A
- For Questions related to the technical aspects of the presentation please use the chat; however, we may not be able to answer all questions

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A little bit about us . . . . .

LINDA RICCIO


OT/L and Vice-President of Therapy Services for Transitional Care Management

Grief Counselor



MELISSA TILTON, OTA, BS, COTA, ROH

OTA and Clinical Operations Area Director for GRS and Adjunct faculty for NSCC.



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GRIEF & STRESS

Support

FOR CARE PROVIDERS

These are Challenging Times

Why are we talking about this?

Change in our life and our work environment

"I'm on the front-line watching people I care about slowly deteriorate and die."

Profound personal losses with work / home-life balance challenges, stress at work

Our resources have changed – for personal balance and resiliency

Need to focus on promoting self-care & wellness to care for yourself and others

"I feel so guilty that I didn't get hit as badly as my peers"

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How are you coping with all the stress of the pandemic?

- intense and chaotic times complicated by grief
- grief can be about a person, or about the situation
- un-recognized grief won't go away
- grief is disruptive in your life
- consequences of suppressing grief
- grief "ambushes"
- pressure to be "normal"
- we are all experiencing "a new normal"
- unknown recovery period → chronic stress

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Grief Complications

- "I can't find my keys."
- "I forgot about my daughter's soccer game."
- "I just can't get it together lately."
- "I'm overwhelmed."
- not being able to concentrate
- brain fog
- change in sleep patterns
- low frustration tolerance
- physical problems
- holding onto stuff is like "clogging a major artery"

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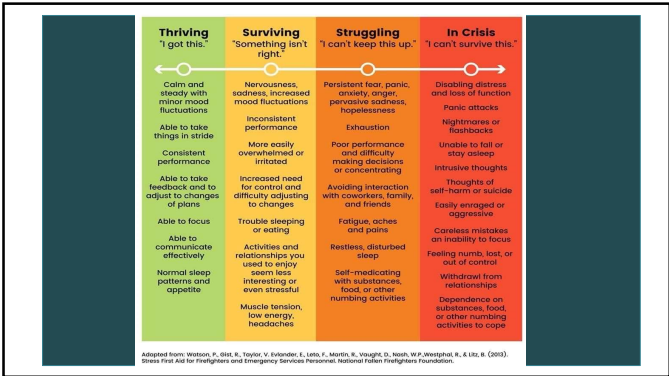
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Processing Grief

- don't suppress your emotions
- honestly express your feelings
- "lean into it"
- "in order to be strong, you have to be weak" → "you have to feel to heal"
- letting go of "having it all together"
- don't rush
- setting aside your pain / grief to accomplish certain tasks – *however* . . . .
- your greatest strength can be your greatest weakness

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PTSD

- PTSD is real
- our brain is "re-wired" as a result of processing trauma
- delays processing grief
- flashbacks or "in a fog"
- fear about feeling safe
- may "over-respond" to some situations or be "hypervigilant"
- avoidance or "leaning into it"
- "How long does this last?"
- Secondary trauma

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When Other  
People Don't  
Understand

Strategies to respond

- responding to an ambush / grief effects
- people respond to stress / grief differently
- explaining to others
- “thank you”
- “this is my healing process”
- “the new normal” – What is this teaching you in your life?

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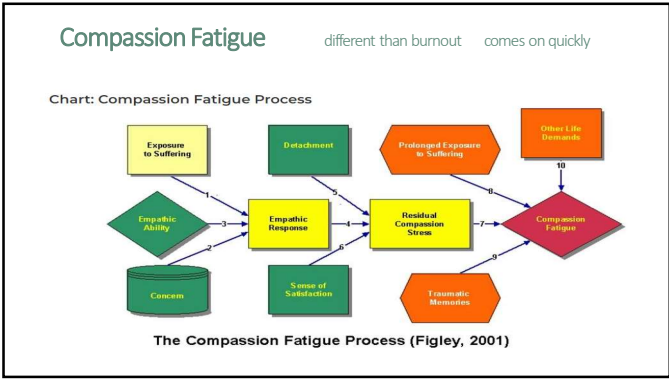
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You can't pour from an empty cup.  
Take care of yourself first.  
- Unknown

Compassion Fatigue

- <https://www.compassionfatigue.org/>
- Don't make huge life changes right now
- Revisit your passion

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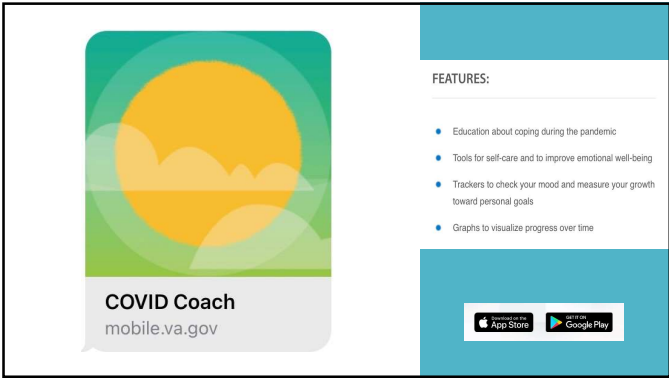
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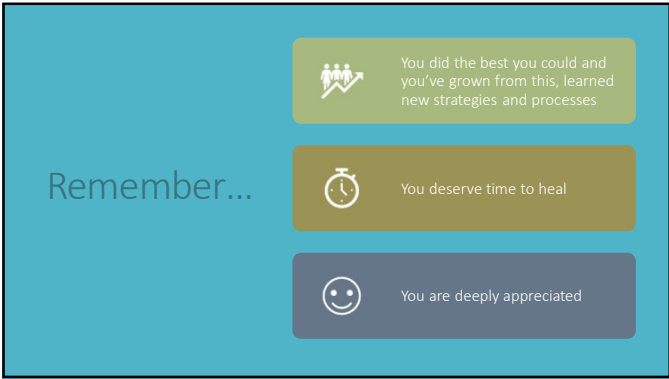
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# Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following 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

## Physical Self-Care

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat healthily
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular medical care for prevention
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get medical care when needed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time off when sick
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get massages
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get enough sleep
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wear clothes I like
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

## Psychological Self-Care

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for self-reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have my own personal psychotherapy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write in a journal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read literature that is unrelated to work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be curious

- \_\_\_\_\_ Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

### **Emotional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stay in contact with important people in my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow myself to cry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find things that make me laugh
- \_\_\_\_\_ Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

### **Spiritual Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time in nature
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find a spiritual connection or community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to inspiration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cherish my optimism and hope
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to not knowing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meditate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have experiences of awe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute to causes in which I believe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

### **Relationship Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule regular activities with my children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time to see friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call, check on, or see my relatives
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with my companion animals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stay in contact with faraway friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow others to do things for me
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enlarge my social circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask for help when I need it
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:



### **Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to chat with co-workers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set limits with clients and colleagues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular supervision or consultation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a peer support group
- \_\_\_\_\_ (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

### **Overall Balance**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

### **Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Retrieved 8/6/2010 from

[http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self\\_care\\_assess.shtml](http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml) and adapted by Lisa D. Butler, Ph.D.)