

Self-Care for Health Care Providers

Practical Strategies for Personal Development
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Disclosure

I have no real or perceived vested interests that relate to this presentation nor do I have any relationships with pharmaceutical companies, biomedical devices manufacturers, and/or other corporations whose products or services are related to pertinent therapeutic areas.

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Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to:

1. Assess self-care needs relative to the work environment and personal life demands
2. Analyze and Evaluate the cause/effect relationship between self-care and certain positive health outcomes, as well as work-related productivity
3. Review and Determine the best plan for implementing self-care practices to enhance personal development and wellness

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Part One - Assessment

- Overview of Professional Demands
- Self-Inventory

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Today's Health Care Professional

Describe the picture...

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Check all that apply

- Credentialed, licensed, certified
- In demand
- Disciplined
- Stressed
- Committed
- Well trained
- Sleep deprived
- Relaxed
- Makes & keeps medical appointments

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Professional Growth

Check all that translate into professional growth...

- Second job
- Flexible Work Arrangements
- Moving into Administration
- Language Lessons
- Foreign Travel
- Compressed/Rotating Schedule
- Direct Practice
- Bedside Care
- Mentors/Learning Coaches/Preceptors

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Challenges

- Working holidays/weekends
- Rotating shifts & assignments
- Missed family time
- Intensity
- Crisis orientation
- Multiple/Competing Demands & Priorities
- Personal Health Issues
- Giving 'til it hurts

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Response to Challenges: Coping Strategies

- Retail therapy
- Meditation/Prayer
- Overeating
- Bodywork/Exercise
- Nail Biting/Teeth Grinding
- Smoking/ Drinking
- Running/Walking
- Sports
- Art or Needlecraft
- Other _____

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Quality of Work Life

Check all that are important...

- Child/elder/pet care benefits
- Flexible Schedules
- Vacation Leave
- Critical Care/Operating Room
- Career Ladder
- Advancement Opportunities
- Training & Support

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Stress

Stress Check-To make stress work for, rather than against you, you must first recognize if stress is taking a toll on your health. Is your body sending you stress signals?

1. Are you restless and unable to sleep?
 2. Do you get irritable or angry when things don't go your way?
 3. Do you have trouble concentrating?
 4. Are you working longer hours yet accomplishing less?
 5. Are you making more mistakes than usual?
 6. Do you find it hard to make decisions?
 7. Do you feel a lack of interest in sex?
 8. Are you smoking, drinking, or eating more than usual?
 9. Do you feel that you are losing control?
 10. Do you experience back and neck pains during the workday?
- From National Assoc. for Female Executives "How to Short-Circuit Stress Get Ahead Guide #3"

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Scourges of Healthy Work Life Balance

The Unholy Trinity:

- Sleep Deprivation
- Sugar (and caffeine)
- Stress

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Part Two – Analysis

- What does this mean in your life?
- What should you pay attention to?

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Sleep

Sara C. Mednick, Ph.D. in her book, Take a Nap! Change Your Life shares the following:

- **"It's free, it's nontoxic and it has no side effects."** pg. 23
- Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster of March 24, 1989 (53 million gallons of crude oil)—the National Transportation Safety Board investigation attributed the accident to the fact that the Third mate who took over for the captain had been "awake for 18 hours prior to taking the helm of the Valdez." pg. 10
- "According to the Sleep Foundation, almost 50 million Americans suffer from sleep deprivation." pg. 11
- "The amount of actual weekday slumber has shrunk to an alarming 6.7 hours" pg. 12
- **Sleep allows the body to repair, replenish and renew itself, as well as support creativity and other cognitive processes.**

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Benefits to Sleep

Mednick lists the following benefits to sleep:

1. Increase in alertness
2. Improved motor performance
3. Improved accuracy
4. Better decision making
5. Improved perceptual skills
6. Increased productivity
7. Improved looks/skin/tissue regeneration
8. Enhanced sex drive
9. Weight loss
10. Reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke

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Sleep Benefits, cont.

- Reduce risk of diabetes
- Improve your stamina
- Elevate your mood
- Boost your creativity
- Reduce Stress
- Help your memory
- Reduce dependence on drugs/alcohol
- Alleviate migraines, ulcers and other problems with psychological components
- Improve the ease of your nocturnal sleep

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Sugar

- Mark Hyman, M.D. in his book, UltraMetabolism concurs with the assessment that sleep deprivation contributes to weight gain and adds that *sugar* has a damaging effect on the body.

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Sugar Consumption

Hyman says that "A major problem today is that we are swimming in sugar. The average person eats about 180 pounds of sugar a year. Or about a ½ a pound per person per day. Remember, that is average, which means that some people are eating a lot more." pg. 95

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Effects of Too Much Sugar

Hyman goes on to describe the effects of too much sugar and high glycemic foods such as white rice, pasta, potatoes and bread:

1. Dangerous resistance to insulin
2. Excess sugar and refined carbohydrates "burn hotter and generate more free radicals" that weaken rather than strengthen the body's functioning
3. Too much sugar increases *oxidative stress and damages the mitochondria that convert calories into energy

* a condition of increased oxidant production in animal cells characterized by the release of free radicals and resulting in cellular degeneration/creates imbalance and impairs cell maintenance and repair

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More Effects of Excess Sugar

- Contributes to fat in the liver cells
- Increases inflammation
- Suppresses immune function
- Weakens eyesight
- Speeds the aging process causing wrinkles and gray hair
- Increases the risk of heart disease
- Contributes to weight gain and obesity

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Linking Diet to Stress

- Hyman points out that--
- Food choices and patterns can be dramatically affected by stress
- Hormones react to elevated stress levels

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Stress

“Stress is defined as the real or perceived threat to your body or your ego.” Hyman

- Stress puts hormones out of balance---more cortisol is produced resulting in weight gain; especially around ones middle or belly
- Unmanaged stress leads to ill health

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Stress, Diet and Obesity

- “When the brain is chronically stressed, many other hormones get out of balance. For example, cortisol makes us less sensitive to leptin, the hormone that tells our brains we are full. When this happens, we tend to eat more and crave more sugar. That is what we are inclined to eat more under chronic stress...Many people who are under chronic stress suffer from “night eating syndrome.”

Mark A. Hyman, M.D. 2005/“Refrigerator Rights—The Missing Link in Health, Disease, and Obesity in [Alternative Therapies in Health & Medicine](#)”

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Effects of Stress

Taken from the New York City Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Health Bulletin entitled, “Stress: Hope to Cope”

- Eating or sleeping problems
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Poor Concentration or memory
- Difficulty making decisions
- Headache, sweating, nervousness
- Frequent colds
- Mood swings, irritability, impatience, short temper and anger
- Anxiety, worry, fear and depression
- High blood pressure, chest pains, heart disease, heart attack, stroke

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Stress Signals

From "How to Short-Circuit Stress" (Get Ahead Guide #3) by the National Association of Female Executives

Physical-stomachaches, headaches, back/neck pains, high blood pressure, ulcers, diarrhea, facial tics, digestive problems, nausea, dry mouth, stammering or stuttering, rapid breathing, fatigue

Behavioral-lateness, forgetfulness, accident-proneness, loss of concentration, insomnia, chronic tardiness or procrastination, increased smoking, drinking or drug-taking, overeating, reduced sexual drive, yelling complaining

Emotional-anxiety, moodiness, irritability, hostility, depression, frustration, feelings of helplessness or panic

Psychological-low self esteem, insecurity, indecision, diminished creativity or motivation, feelings of inadequacy

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Linking Stress to Burnout

- Multiple stressors can be an indicator of burnout...

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Burnout

- "Burnout is a wearing down...imposed by families, jobs, friends, lovers, value systems or society, which depletes ones energy...accompanied by an overload of stress and eventually impacts on ones motivation, attitudes and behaviors."

Women's Burnout by Freudenberger & North

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Know Your Triggers for Burnout

In *Women's Burnout*, Freudenberger & North detail **12 stages of Burnout---SYMPTOM CYCLE**

1. Compulsion to Prove
2. Intensity
3. Subtle Deprivations
4. Dismissal of Conflict & Needs
5. Distortion of Values
6. Heightened Denial
7. Disengagement
8. Observable Behavioral Changes
9. Depersonalization
10. Emptiness
11. Depression
12. Total Burnout

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Burnout Recovery

Burnout Prevention & Recovery: This information can be helpful to both men and women:

1. Stop denying
2. Avoid isolation
3. Change the circumstances
4. Diminish intensity in your life
5. Stop overnurturing
6. Learn to say "no"
7. Begin to back off and detach
8. Reassess your values
9. Learn to pace yourself
10. Take care of your body
11. Diminish worry and anxiety
12. Keep your sense of humor!

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Part Three – Action Steps

- Identifying Self-Care Strategies
- Making an Individualized Plan

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Self Care ABC's

An excellent model for self-care by Saakvitne & Pearlman

A wareness

B alance

C onnection

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Compassion Fatigue

- Saakvitne and Pearlman have written about compassion fatigue which is also referred to secondary trauma and vicarious trauma.
- The ABC's of Self-Care a reminder to pay attention to conditions in your personal and professional life.
- Review your demands and needs to determine the types of self-care that would support you.

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ABC's

- Awareness-Be attuned to your needs, limits, emotions, and resources. Heed all levels of and sources of information: cognitive, intuitive and somatic. Practice mindfulness and acceptance.
- Balance-Maintain balance among activities, especially work, play and rest. Inner balance allows attention to all aspects of oneself.
- Connection-Connect to oneself, to others, and to something larger/greater. Positive communication is part of connection and breaks the silence of unacknowledged pain. These connections offset isolation and increase feelings of validation, integrity, wellness and hope.

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Self-Care is **not** Optional

The level of self-care that is practiced determines *fitness to serve*---

Benefits of Self-Care:

- Improved Health Outcomes
- Resilience
- Enhanced Vitality
- Clarity & Insight into Life's Purpose
- Greater Sense of Balance and Confidence

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Self-Care “To Do List”

Awareness

- Use affirmations
- Make time for quiet and reflection
- “Focus without the urgency of crisis” (Cadiz)
- Cultivate present moment awareness
- Think about keeping a journal
- Think about integrating Music, Movement, or Meditation into your life
- Move- walk, run, stretch, jump, exercise

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Self-Care “To Do’s,” cont.

Balance

- Keep a regular sleep schedule
- Get sufficient quantity/quality of sleep
- Limit your intake of sugar that is hidden in many processed foods (ie. drinks, snacks)
- Drink water upon awakening and throughout the day to keep well hydrated
- Find healthy ways to relax—take “down time”

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Self-Care “To-Do’s,” cont.

Connection

- Schedule time with family and friends
- Confide in a friend
- Participate in community activities
- Pursue an interest or hobby
- Network with business/work contacts
- Become a mentor, or find a mentor
- Volunteer for a worthy cause
- Seek support for difficult projects, tasks

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Take Action---NOW!

Take a STAND, make a PLAN

Ask yourself

- What can I do right now?
- What can I do later today?
- What can I do tomorrow?

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Individualized ABC’s

Awareness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Balance

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Connection

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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Reminders

These websites will give you reminders about self care:

- Take Back Your Time Day website: www.timeday.org a group that is “fighting overwork and time poverty in America”
- Sara C. Mednick, Ph.D. at www.takeanap.info
- Mark Hyman at www.ultrametaolism.com

TAKE CARE and BE WELL

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