



The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium

Thriving in a Stressful and Sometimes Traumatic Environment: Taking Responsibility to Promote and Adapt Excellent Self-Care

PRESENTED BY:

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Disclaimer

- Pam Malloy has indicated no financial relationships, arrangements, or affiliations.
- Presentation will not include discussion of investigational or off-label use of a product.

Objectives

- Describe the stress and anxiety associated with balancing work and personal life
- Discuss effective communications strategies that support care of self and others in hospice and palliative care settings
- Design a personal plan of self-care and renewal that supports professional resilience.

Sound Familiar?

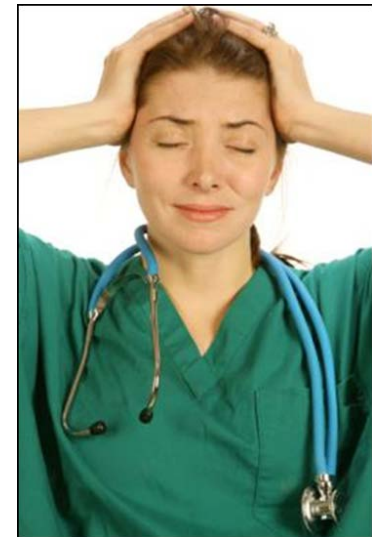
- You are an APRN working in a very large, hectic oncology practice
- You have 3 children who are busy with school and extracurricular activities—all of whom you serve as their Uber driver (without pay)
- Your 84-year-old mother lives with you and you frequently have to take vacation time in order to accompany her to doctor appointments
- You have not taken a vacation for over 3 years, due to conflicting schedules, lack of funds, and inability to leave your mom alone
- Oh yes...you have decided to go back to school and obtain your DNP

How Did You Do on the Professional Quality of Life (PROQOL) Screening?

1. Any surprises?
2. Compassion satisfaction score
3. Burnout
4. Secondary traumatic stress

Our Lives are Complex and Providing Good Self-Care Can Be Challenging

- Promoting healthy living in spite of personal chaos
- Possessing professional burdens and stressors
- Prioritizing family needs and responsibilities



Everyday you **WITNESS:**

- Medical futility
 - Prolongation of suffering
 - Denial of hospice/palliative care services

Everyday you **EXPERIENCE:**

- Moral distress

Todaro-Franceschi, 2015



Hazards in the “Helping Professions”

“Everyone who cares about patients is at risk of eventually being injured, to a greater or lesser extent, by the hazards of frequent encounters with illness, injury, trauma, and death—not because we did something wrong, but because we care. Ironically, those who are burned out, worn down, fatigued, and traumatized tend to work harder.”



Fox et al., 2014

What We Know About Stress

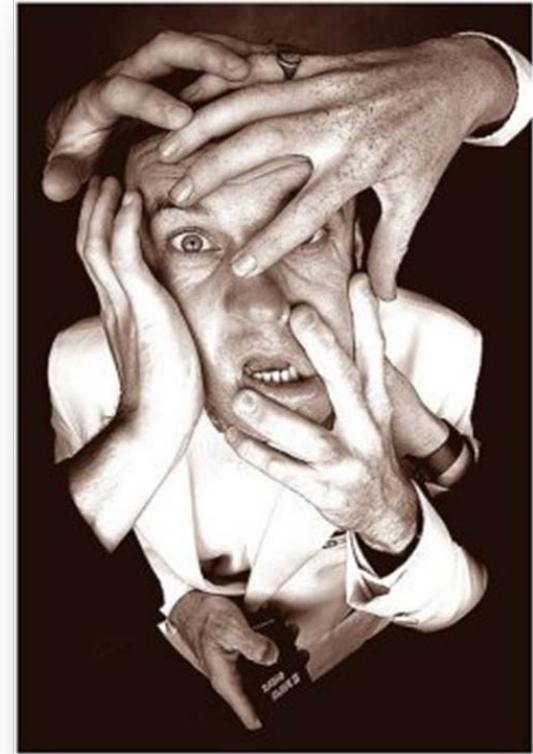
- **Contributes to disease**
 - Hyperglycemia
 - Hyperinsulinemia
 - Arteriosclerosis
 - Hypertension
- **Decreases function of immune system**
- **Causes premature aging**
- **Contributes to chronic fatigue and/or depression**



Blum, 2014

Stress Manifestations

- ↑ BP, HR, metabolic rate, reaction time
- Indigestion, changes in bowel function
- Weight gain or loss
- Menstrual disorders
- Asthma flair-ups



ELNEC-Geriatric, 2018

Stress: Behavioral Manifestations

- Fear/excitement
- Apprehension, unease, sadness, depression
- Poor sleep, fatigue, listlessness
- Pessimism, negative attitudes
- Increased smoking, alcohol, or drug consumption



ELNEC-Geriatric, 2018

Long-Term Manifestations of Stress

- Compassion fatigue
- Multiple losses, sustained/compounded grief
- Burnout




Vachon et al., 2015

Is It Compassion Fatigue or Burnout?

- **Compassion Fatigue:** Physical, emotional, and spiritual result of chronic and continuous self-sacrifice and/or prolonged exposure to difficult situations
 - Difficult and unable to love, nurture, care for, or empathize with another's suffering.
 - Some describe as “the price one pays for caring.”
- **Burnout:** Physical and psychological, with a decrease in loss of motivation in the workplace. Triggered by:
 - More workplace demands
 - Bureaucratic stressors
 - Lack of resources,
 - Interpersonal stressors
 - Organizational policies that can lead to diminished caring, cynicism, and ineffectiveness

Harris & Griffin, 2015



“...we have the gift and curse of extreme empathy and we suffer. We feel the feelings of our clients. We experience their fears. We dream their dreams. Eventually, we lose a certain spark of optimism, humor and hope. We tire. We aren't sick, but we aren't ourselves.”

~C. Figley, 1995



Occupational Stress in Hospice and Palliative Care

Workload

Control

Reward

Community

Fairness

Values

Vachon, 2011

**Developing
Your Own
Care Plan**



Factors Influencing Adaptation

- Professional education
- Personal death history
- Life changes
- Support systems

Vachon et al., 2015



Self-Awareness: Being Proactive In Caring for Ourselves

- Attention
- Acknowledgement
- Affection
- Acceptance

Fox, 2014



Finding Meaning and Purpose In What You Do



Promoting Excellent Self-Care

Study: 605 nurses, ranging in age from 22 to 78 years, 0 – 58 years of nursing experience

Practiced in all types of healthcare settings

Results (on a scale of 0 = not important, 5 = extremely important)

- Taking a vacation (4.6)
- Having healthy relationships (4.5)
- Celebrating life (4.3)
- Having reality checks (3.9)
- Debriefing (3.2)

Malloy et al., 2013



What Self-Care Is Not

- An emergency response plan
- Acting selfishly
- Doing more

What Self-Care Is

Taking the time to be a human *being*, as well as a human *doing*



Keys to Self-Care

- Finding meaning in your work
- Balance
- Assessing support systems
- Spiritual support
- Education in end-of-life care
- Self care strategies
- Caring for yourself
 - Physically
 - Psychologically
 - Socially
 - Spiritually

Vachon et al., 2015



Find a Mentor Be a Mentor



The Consequences of Making Good Self-Care Choices Are Far-Reaching

- **Satisfaction:** There is a link between job satisfaction and patient satisfaction
- **Performance:** Staff who look after themselves are able to bring their A game to work every day. The quality of their work is high consistently.
- **Retention:** It costs less to keep your people than to find replacements.
- **High Standards:** When you lose good people, you lose the example they set.
- **Teamwork:** There is a ripple effect.
- **Safety:** High stress causes tunnel vision. Burned out people miss things.
- **Time off:** Improved wellness means fewer sick days, workers compensation cases, and addiction-related problems.

Adventures in Caring, Oxygen for Caregivers, 2014



Stress Management Techniques

- Develop a personal philosophy
 - Meaning of life
 - Personal peace with your own mortality
 - Orchestrating balance
- Assertive communication
- Conflict management
- Lifestyle management
- Self-renewal

We Develop Care Plans for Our Patients, Let's Develop Care Plans for Ourselves!



Where do we start?

- Self-care is multi-dimensional (physical, psychological, social, and spiritual)
- Take responsibility to get help
- Speak up about your concerns to administrators
- Plan at least two-weeks to be off in the next year
- Journal
- Take a technology break
- Have a “funny utterance” file
- Be mindful
- Have an attitude of gratitude
- Choose your friends carefully!
- **Identify at least 3 things that are the most important to you**

Appreciate the Gift of Life: Remember it is Temporary



Rice Co Regional Hospital
Lyons, KS



Oak Hill Cemetery
Ballard, CA



I nurture
myself so
I can
nurture
others.

Final Thought

- Take care of yourself—physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually
- Rejoice in the work you have been called to do
- Be grateful and mindful
- Make good choices with the control you have
- Live a balanced life

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