Self-Care
How to Increase Productivity while Avoiding Burnout

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Neighborhood Library Supervisor at Brooklyn Public Library. I have spent some of my career within the social services arena, developing programs and meeting constituents' needs. Currently, I assess the delivery of library services, by employing trauma-informed methods, to transitional populations in public library branches and homeless shelters in Brooklyn, N.Y. I received my MLS degree from Long Island University.
**Purpose**

* With ever increasing demands for library services, heavy workloads, and multiple requests from our public could create an ideal environment for burnout. While some stressors are unavoidable, prolonged exposure to it can cause detachment, pessimism, and a loss of enjoyment in the library profession.

**Outcomes**

* Identify signals of Physical, Behavioral and Emotional barriers that leads to burnout

* Understand methods to mitigate stressors caused by public service demands

* Learn how to adopt self-care techniques at work.
Self Care is *NOT* Selfish
**Stress** - A human’s response to excessive demands *(stressors)* which affect Physical, Behavioral and Emotional systems.

**Burnout** - A state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress.

**Compassion Fatigue** - Indifference to charitable appeals on behalf of those who are suffering, experienced as a result of the frequency of interactions.

**Trauma** - A deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope.
Self-Care

Any activities or practices that we engage in purposefully on a regular basis to reduce stress with the intention to improve or enhance our short or long term wellbeing.
5 Domains of Self-Care
Self-Care Activities

Physical self-care:
Activities that promote physical wellness. E.g.: sleep, physical activity, eating habits

Psychological self-care:
Make time for self-reflection. Activities that focus on increased self-awareness. E.g.: engaging in therapy, writing in a journal or meditation

Emotional self-care:
Spend time with others whose company you enjoy.

Spiritual self-care:
Spend time in nature, or seeking higher enlightenment. Doing activities that help you find purpose.

Workplace or professional self-care:
Activities that focus on professional health and competency. E.g.: Professional Development or, take a break during the workday.
Benefits of practicing self-care

• Helps us to identify and manage general stress and stressors
  • Avoiding them when you can
  • How to deal with ones that are unavoidable

• Make us more self-aware of our own vulnerabilities such as becoming re-traumatized

• Enhance our productivity

• Increase in positive thinking

• Help you create, achieve and maintain more balanced life
Public Service Burnout

- Technology issues
- Environmental factors
- Staffing concerns
- Feeling under supported
- Heavy workloads
- Feeling undervalued and unappreciated
- Navigating difficult patrons and coworkers
- Vague expectations of job duties
- Lack of recognition
- Having little or no control of our work environment
- Change
- Feeling under supported
The Mechanics of Stress

Negative vs Positive

- **Negative (Distress)** - Finances, Divorce, Unemployment, Death of significant person, Traffic, Spousal issues, difficulty at work, etc.
  - Results from too much pressure or trauma
  - Occurs when someone struggles with how to handle or cope with a stressor

- **Positive (Eustress)** - Having a baby, Starting a new job, Going on vacation, Learning something new, Getting promoted at work.
  - Can help you achieve your goal
  - It only lasts in the short term
  - It energizes and motivates
  - It is perceived as something within our coping ability
  - It feels exciting
  - It increases focus and performance
  - Makes a person feel in control
## The Mechanics of Stress
### Internal vs External

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Self-Doubt</td>
<td>* Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Fear</td>
<td>* Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Insecurities</td>
<td>* Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Illness</td>
<td>* Finances</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Anxiety</td>
<td>* Sitting in traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Personality traits</td>
<td>* Environmental - pollution, noise, heat, cold,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Negative self talk</td>
<td>* Chemical - alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, narcotics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Technology, Stress and YOU

- Provide/use extensive training for new technology at work
- Eliminate checking emails when you are not at work
- If you are a supervisor, be mindful of when you send out email correspondence
- Close email windows and only check messages at specific times during the day
- Don’t sleep with your phone next to you
- Have a specific time to unplug at night
- Read a physical book instead of an eBook or tablet
Stress and the Brain

Amygdala is our natural built-in alarm system meant to keep us safe. It's responsible for detecting a threat and preparing for emergency events.

Cortisol, the “Stress Hormone” increases glucose in the bloodstream which gives us the boost and energy for “fight or flight.” It also increases our heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension. Long periods of exposure to increased cortisol can increase the risk of diabetes and coronary heart disease. It also can also cause weight gain and is linked to anxiety and depression.

People under stress for long periods of time can develop weakening of the frontal cortex which is critical for executive functioning.
How to Identify Stressors

* Think about what might be triggering this feeling.

* Pay attention to what’s happening (or not happening) in your life right now that may cause you to feel this way.

* Deconstruct and analyze your day, week, month.

* Trust yourself - Only you know what you are feeling, you are your own best advocate.
What do you feel when you get stressed?

Let’s chat about it

Post your response in chat to EVERYONE!
The three major areas that signals of distress show up are Physical, Behavioral and Emotional.

**Physical:**
- Muscle tension, head, back and neck pain
- Constant fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Upset stomach
- Teeth grinding
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea or Constipation

**Behavioral:**
- Insomnia or you’re sleeping too much
- Appetite changes
- Forgetfulness
- Unexplained crying
- Restlessness
- Negative self talk
- Isolating self from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities

**Emotional:**
- Depression
- Irritable or moody
- Feeling of hopelessness
- General unhappiness or depression
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Impatience
- Feeling lonely and isolated
- Excessive drinking, smoking or drug use
How to practice Self-Care
Close your eyes and visualize an internal distraction.
Once that distraction is identified and visualized, sit still with your eyes closed and imagine locking up that distraction in a box.
If it helps, physically act out locking up the distraction.
Muscle Meditation

* Lay flat on the floor and close your eyes.
* Starting with your toes, work your way up your body, wiggling/tensing each body part for 15 seconds. Wiggle your toes, then ankles all the way to your forehead.
* Try to keep the rest of your body “asleep” while moving through each part.
* Repeat the exercise again, spending 30 second instead of 15 seconds on each part of the body.
4-7-8 Breath

1. Exhale completely

2. Inhale 4 seconds through your nose

3. Hold your breath for 7 seconds

4. Exhale completely for 8 seconds

5. Repeat
Other Ways to Practice Self-Care

* Exercise
* Work on a hobby that you enjoy
* Plan ahead
* Laugh
* Eat a balanced diet
* Create a gratitude book
* Journaling
* Spend quality time with people you believe are important
* Do something new and/or different
* Listen to music
* Read a new book
* Art Therapy
* Change your expectations
* Schedule time for self-care and make it a priority
How to retain optimal levels of efficiency and effectiveness at work

- Take a break during the day!!!!!
- Check in with yourself at the beginning and the end of your day
  - How are you feeling?
  - Did you accomplish your goals?
  - What worked vs what didn’t?
- Have a clear understanding of your roles & responsibilities as an employee
- Schedule quiet time to complete tasks
- Manage your health
- Identify projects that are exciting and rewarding
- Balance your workload
  - Rotate duties from high stress to low stress task
- Develop time management skills
  - Create a task list
  - Prioritize
  - Use a calendar
  - Know your deadlines
- Align yourself with the positive people
- Build a support system of colleagues with similar goals
- Organize your workspace
  - Take time to arrange your workspace so it’s comfortable and comforting
How to Mitigate Stressors caused by public service demands

* Set an Intention for your day
* Set clear personal and professional boundaries and stick to them
* Build a support system at work
* Know when to de-escalate situations within yourself
* Self-Reflect – Change your perspective if needed
  * Have a positive mindset and remember that everyday is a new day
* Act rather than react to situations
  * You’re in control of your actions, not others
  * Identify the aspect of the situation that you can control

* Pause
  * Take a moment and breathe
* Develop your customer service skills
* Know when to ask for help
* Learn to delegate when needed
* Treat yourself and give yourself permission to do something that you enjoy
* Learn to respectfully say NO!!
* Create your own self-care plan
Supporting Others Within Your Scope

**General Practice**
- Check in often (schedule time)
- Create an environment that is positive and safe for communication
- Allow colleague to feel
- Encourage social time (virtual or socially distanced)
Supporting Others Within Your Scope

For Supervisors

* Model healthy behavior
* Adjust staff procedures and schedules (if possible)
* Offer support from organization (CCA, Union-Personal Service Unit)
* Monitor and review staff well-being
* Act and face change authentically
* Be informed of institutional practices
* Be as open and transparent as possible
* Have a genuine concern for staff
* Give consistent and clear information
* Identify things at work that cause stress and work with staff member to create a solution and plan
How to express ways that you want or need support from others

* Be as open, honest and transparent as possible
* Be very clear about needs
* Don’t be ashamed
* Step outside of your comfort zone
* Educate yourself of available resources
* Align yourself with positive and helpful people
* Speak with supervisor or union rep if possible
* ASK FOR THE SUPPORT!!!
Self-Care 4 Step Plan
One Size Doesn't fit all

* Write your plan out!
* Evaluate your Coping Skills
  * Examine your current habits
* Identify your self care needs
  * Examine what you need in your everyday
  * Examine what you need in the event of a crisis
* Identify Barriers and Areas of Improvement
  * Reflect, Examine and Replace
# Self-Care Assessment

**1-Never 2-Rarely 3-Occasionally 4-Frequently**

## Physical Self-Care
- Eat regularly (breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Wear clothes I like
- Do some fun physical activity

## Emotional Self-Care
- Spend time with people whose company I enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in my life
- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- Identify and seek out comforting activities/places
- Express my outrage in social action or discussion

## Psychological Self-Care
- Have my own personal psychotherapy
- Make time away from technology/Internet
- Notice my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- Engage my intelligence in a new way or area
- Do something at which I am not expert

## Workplace or Professional Self-Care
- Take time to chat with coworkers
- Identify projects/tasks that are exciting
- Balance my load so that nothing is "way too much"
- Arrange work space to be comfortable
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate/advocate for my needs

## Spiritual Self-Care
- Make time for reflection
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be open to knowing
- Meditate
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read or listen to something inspirational

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Self-Care Plan
Write it down!!

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5 Senses in 5 Mindful Minutes
“...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance.”
Questions?
Contact Me

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