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Interprofessional Webinar Series in Palliative Care

Self-Care for Nurses: Staying in Balance

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Objectives

- Provide an overview of self-care
- Discuss the risks of professional caregiving for patients and families at end-of-life
- Describe elements of self-care & promoting wellness in the workplace
- Take 2 polls on self-care practices
- Brief self-care exercise

Defining Self-Care & Related Terms

- Self-care – “the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, and maintain health and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider”
- Vicarious traumatization
- Compassion fatigue
- Burnout



World Health Organization. (2009). Self-care in the context of primary health care. *Report of the Regional Consultation*, Bangkok, Thailand.

Defining Self-Care & Related Terms

- Self-care
- **Vicarious traumatization**
 - Stress response to indirect & repeated exposure to others' trauma experiences & effects
 - Characterized by avoidance, arousal, and re-experiencing
 - Specific to trauma workers
- Compassion fatigue
- Burnout

Defining Self-Care & Related Terms

- Self-care
- Vicarious traumatization
- **Compassion fatigue**
 - Stress response to cumulative exposure to **trauma, death, disfigurement, debility, & despair**
 - Helplessness
 - Isolation
 - Confusion
 - Short-temper
 - Resentful
 - Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
 - Emotional or physical exhaustion
 - Specific to helping professions
- Burnout

Defining Self-Care & Related Terms

- Self-care
- Vicarious traumatization
- Compassion fatigue
- **Burnout**
 - Stress response to **professional & occupational factors** (e.g., workload, institutional support, teamwork, sense of fairness)
 - Emotional or physical exhaustion
 - Cynicism
 - Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
 - Apathy
 - Not specific to helping professions

Why You Need Self-Care on Hand in Your Care Kit

- Nurses may be particularly at risk
- Self-awareness & self-care mitigate risk
- Promote personal & professional wellness
- Promote physical & emotional health
- Improve patient care
 - Risk for medical errors & adverse events
 - Risk for impaired decision making
 - Risk for patient & family dissatisfaction with care

Compassion Fatigue & Burnout Prevalence

- Common, not clear how common
 - Roughly 20%
 - Range between 11 & 80%
- Higher rates in nursing relative to other disciplines
- Palliative & hospice rates similar to other disciplines

Risks in Professional Caregiving

- Dealing with pain, suffering, dying, & death
- Avoiding patients or emotional distancing
- Lack of confidence in communication skills
- Difficulty breaking bad news
- Insufficient education
- Time pressures & workplace bureaucracy
- Interdisciplinary team conflict

Protective Factors in Professional Caregiving

- Satisfaction/gratification in caregiving
- Effective communication
- Positive self-evaluation
- Support
- Supervision
- Continuing education
- Stable personal relationships
- Physical exercise
- Leisure
- Relaxation
- Individual and/or team prevention strategies
- Working part-time

Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan

- Use your nursing skills to create a care plan for your self-care
- What is my motivation for nursing?
 - How do I stay connected with my motivation?
 - How to I expand my motivation?
- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Spiritual



Hill Jones, S. (2005). A self-care plan for hospice workers. *American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Medicine*, 22(2), 125-128.

Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan

- Physical – How can I take care of my body?
 - How does my stress show up physically?
 - Pay attention to body signs of stress
 - Regular medical check-ups
 - Body-focused stress-relief

Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan

- Emotional – How can I take care of my mind?
 - How does my stress show up emotionally, cognitively, or behaviorally?
 - Recognize & respect that professional caregivers grieve too
 - How do I process emotion?
 - Time alone?
 - Talking with others?
 - Creative expression?
 - Speak to yourself with compassion
 - Make time for things you enjoy in life

Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan

- Social – How can I take care of my relationships?
 - How does my stress show up in my relationships?
 - What are my own needs?
 - Am I setting healthy limits with others professionally & personally?
 - Am I addressing conflicts with coworkers & managers in a healthy way?
 - Get support when needed

Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan

- Spiritual – How can I take care of my spirit?
 - How does my stress affect my spirit?
 - Religious, spiritual, existential
 - What do I believe is the meaning of life?
 - What helps me feel connected to something larger than myself?

(Poll #1 coming next!)

Poll #1:

Which area do you want to pay particular attention to in your self-care?

- a) Physical
- b) Emotional
- c) Social
- d) Spiritual



Which Strategies do You Want or Need to Make Time for in Your Life?

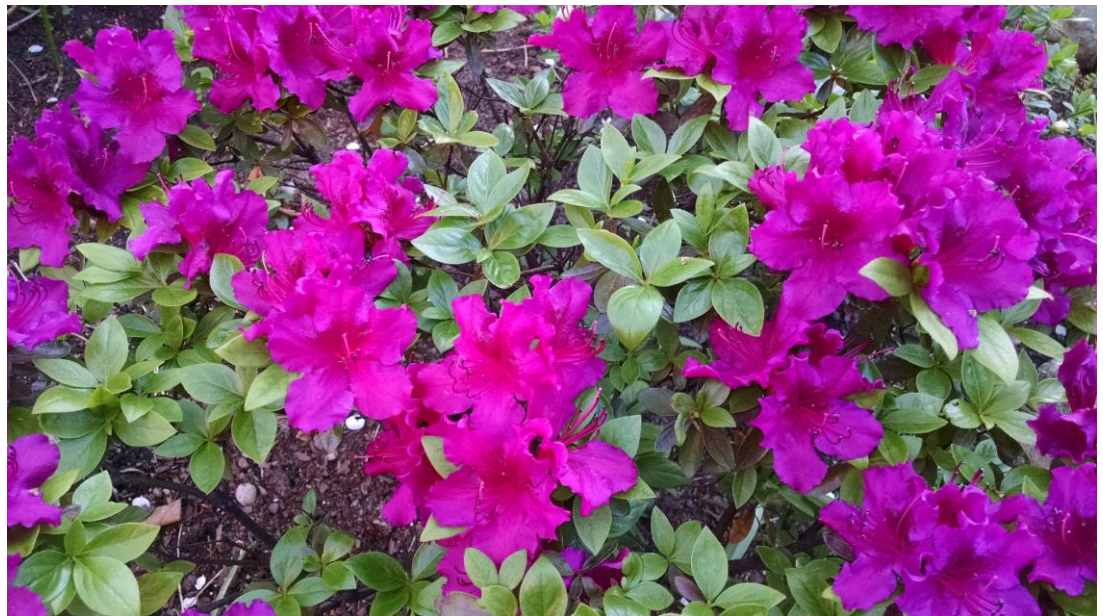
- Exercise
- Stretching
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Breath exercises
- Imagery
- Hot bath
- Dancing
- Gardening
- Cooking
- Reading
- Art
- Music
- Writing/journaling
- Creative work
- Pets
- Chocolate
- Friends
- Family
- Intimacy
- Time with children
- Vacation
- Religion
- Prayer
- Community
- Volunteering
- Being in nature
- _____
- _____
- _____

(Poll #2 coming next!)

Poll #2

How much time do you currently spend on self-care during your workday?

- a) 0 minutes
- b) 1-5 minutes
- c) 6-10 minutes
- d) 11-20 minutes
- e) >20 minutes



Strategies for Self-Care in the Workplace

- Develop rituals or habits
- Brief time to connect with
 - Meaning
 - Grounding
 - Centering
 - Peace
 - Calm
 - Energizing



Strategies for Self-Care in the Workplace

- Combine routine task time with self-care
 - Hand hygiene
 - Bathroom breaks
 - Documentation time
 - Team meetings
 - Lunch break
 - Travel between patients
 - Entering a patient’s home or room
 - Patient care
 - “It doesn’t take me any longer to wash someone’s face with a smile on my own.”*



*Perry, B. (2008). Why exemplary oncology nurses seem to avoid compassion fatigue. *Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal*, 18(2), 87-99.

Strategies for Self-Care in the Workplace

- Diaphragmatic breaths
- 4-7-8 breaths x 3 (inhale for 4, hold for 7, exhale for 8)
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualization
- Mantra meditation
- Prayer
- Acknowledge emotional reactions
- Cry when needed
- Practice gratitude
- Keep a folder for thank-you's
- Thank a co-worker
- Thank yourself
- Massage tense muscles
- Stretch
- Hold a favorite yoga pose
- 90 seconds of jumping jacks
- Aromatherapy
- Eat a healthy lunch
- 1 square of chocolate
- Slowly apply hand cream
- Water a plant
- Observe the clouds
- Take a walk
- Discuss a case with a co-worker
- Laugh with a co-worker
- Laugh with a patient
- Take your sick days when needed
- Single-task
- _____
- _____
- _____

One-Minute Self-Care: 15 Breaths Exercise

- Feet flat on the floor
- Elongated spine
- Eyes closed or softly unfocused
- Set your intention
- 15 long breaths



One-Minute Self-Care Check-In

- How was that for you?
- How might you tweak your practice?
- Where could this fit in your day?
- What else do you want to do for self-care?
 - During your workday?
 - In your life outside of work?

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Q&A