Interprofessional Webinar Series
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

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 do I expand my motivation?

• Physical
• Emotional
• Social
• Spiritual

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.”*

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?
References


