

Secondary Trauma and burnout in the workplace

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Santa Clara County Employee Assistance Program

Internal Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

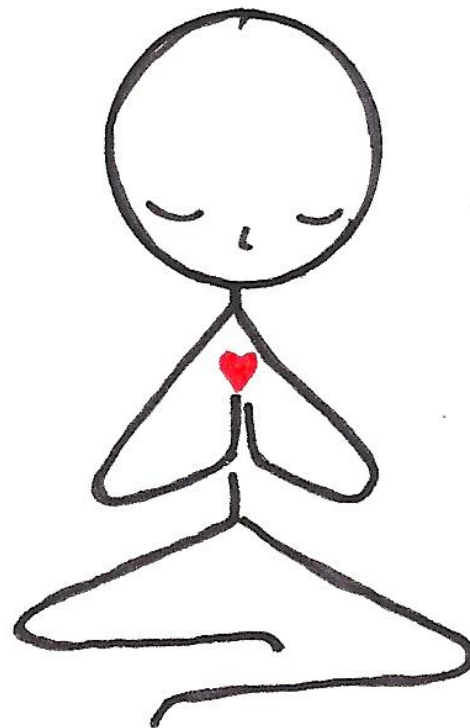
- Free confidential counseling for County employees and their immediate families
- Personal or work-related problems
- Seven sessions per calendar year
- Brief counseling
- Assessment & Referral
- Separate from health insurance

Internal Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- ▶ Countywide Classes
- ▶ Trainings - Requested by Departments
- ▶ Easy access: 408-241-7772, Weekdays 8am-7pm. Last apt 5:30pm
- ▶ www.SCCEAP.org

“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.”

~Buddha




Compassion Satisfaction

- Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, care giving roles
- Providing care, feeling good about giving.
- Connection to the community , feeling like a part of the remedy. Working with colleagues, collaboration and unity.
- Beliefs about self, “I am a giver/healer.”
- Altruism
- Life is ultimately self serving. It's ok!
- Do it because it makes you feel good, not to save the world.

Compassion Fatigue

When helping others hurts us...





Burnout

- ▶ Helping to the point where it feels self-destructive
- ▶ Hopelessness
- ▶ Ineffective “nothing I will do will help this.”
- ▶ Exhaustion, over extending of self.
- ▶ Going through the motions, sometimes even resentment towards clients and staff.
- ▶ Gradual onset, may come and go.
- ▶ May show up as head-ache, mood swing or fatigue.

Secondary Trauma Stress

- Feeling Frightened
- Preoccupied with thoughts of the people one has helped
- Feeling trapped, intrusive thoughts
- On edge, hypervigilant
- Infected by others trauma “it’s in my body”
- Inability to separate one private life and life of helping
- Depersonalization ~numb
- Irrational fears
- Sudden Onset



Trauma and the Body

- ▶ Every event is recorded physiologically (somatically) and particularly stressful events create holding patterns in the body.
- ▶ Holding patterns are ways the body tries to protect itself through muscular armor (bracing).
- ▶ Listening to the body mindfully can lead to healing and the release of holding patterns (mindfulness meditation/body scan).
- ▶ Micro-motor movements and general posture say a lot about a person, as it is literally a psycho-somatic translation.
- ▶ Trauma is not defined by the event, but rather by the person's reaction and story they tell themselves as a result (the world is scary, I'm not good enough, etc..).

What is Anxiety?

- Anxiety can be traced back to the German root word *Angst*.
- It is defined as the narrowing or chocking of the breathing passage ways.
- Experiential: Try tightening your stomach and throat and hold it for 2 seconds
- That's exactly what anxiety feels like.
- Becoming more aware of the breath and the tension in the body can relieve anxiety.
- Take a sweeping inventory of your body.

Tools for Personal Survival

- Acknowledge the impact of the stress. Come to terms. Being okay with not being okay is the first step.
- 20 second rule: How long it takes for the body to activate cortisol into the blood, making it harder to redirect out of a low mood because the fatigue sets in. Then takes longer to flush out cortisol from the blood.
- Walk-Talk. Breath. Nature fresh air.
- Allowance of feelings. Don't resist what you feel.
- Perceptions and beliefs: Take a look at your what you are telling yourself.
- Stress: 80 % perception, 20% event
- Focus on what you can control. Stay self-focused. You can't change others.
- Let go of the need for people to be different. Respect their refusal to get well. Dignity for all (fundamental).
- Be a role model of ease and wellness.



*a smooth sea never made
a skilled sailor*





Self-Determination


- Honoring people's self-determination is an essential ethical principle in the helping profession.
- It is important to believe in the dignity and personhood of every being.
- People are a lot more resilient than you think.
- Working harder than the patient/client robs their ability to exercise their strength.
- People can be uncanny and surprisingly resourceful.
- You are not savior of the human race. Rather a collaborator.

Life occurs naturally in
sequence, with a beginning,
middle and end



Allowance

- ▶ Learning to allow life to unfold without fighting it or attempting to make it stay the same makes it more smooth and flowing
- ▶ Allow your anxiety, low mood, feelings etc.
- ▶ We do not need to fix or change things right away.
- ▶ Learning to validated our own feelings allows them to move through us. Instead of fighting them.
- ▶ Do you know what happens when you fight your anxiety?




*“Every time I judge someone else, I reveal
an unhealed part of myself.”*

- DON MIGUEL RUIZ

Knowing Your Boundaries

- ▶ Healthy boundaries are essential in caring for yourself and not building resentment towards others. When we don't know our own limits and boundaries we end up doing things we don't enjoy and resent ourselves and others for it.
- ▶ We are going to take turns asking "Can I please hold your hand?" "I need help." The other person will practice saying "No, I'm not available." Make 3 personal requests, on them hand holding. Do this in pairs or triads.
- ▶ Stay mindful and notice what happens to you? What do you notice inside? Does it remind you of a pattern in your life..
- ▶ What kind of story are you telling yourself? Are you unworthy? Are you thinking that the person is being mean? Are they having a bad day? Do they not like you?
- ▶ What did you notice?



I lied and said I was busy.
I was busy;
but not in a way most people
understand.

I was busy taking deeper breaths.
I was busy silencing irrational thoughts.
I was busy calming a racing heart.
I was busy telling myself I am okay.

Sometimes, this is my busy,
and I will not apologize for it.

b.oakman | Anxiety Doesn't Knock First

Ownership of Feelings

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- It is natural to have feelings or reactions to life.
- Sometimes we can look for opportunities to change how we respond to people and circumstances.
- If we experience anger or sadness, we have to be careful not to necessarily blame or attribute the action of the other person or the situation as the cause of those feelings.
- What feelings are you choosing to stay in?
- Ownership/responsibility is liberating and freeing, and gives you more control.
- Start by identifying what you are feeling and how you are reacting to the moment...

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Positive Intentions







What is your Soul Food?

- ▶ How do you recharge? What gets in the way?
- ▶ Your deepest sense of meaning. What connects you to that?
- ▶ Being moved by beauty, music, animals?
- ▶ What makes you feel alive, joyful connected with something beyond yourself?
- ▶ They don't teach you about life in Medical/Nursing School
- ▶ Do you dance, sing or play music?

Benefits of Being Body Oriented

- ▶ Thoughts are subject to distortion
- ▶ Assumptions can be damaging
- ▶ Our Bodies tell us the truth and keeps the score with memories.
- ▶ Develop an immediate felt sense in the body
- ▶ Find your own peace, independent from the external environment
- ▶ Dance, yoga, and getting a massage can lead to peace.

Body scan



Be quiet and patient.
Let evil and unpleasantness
pass quietly over you.
Do not try to avoid them.
Observe them carefully.
Let active understanding
take the place of reflex irritation,
and you will grow
out of your trouble.
-Kafka

Thank you for coming



Your Internal Employee Assistance Program

408-241-7772

www.scceap.gov