Self Care

A Guide for Addiction Professionals

Unifying science, education, and services to transform lives

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The Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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Cura te ipsum

(Take care of your own self)

Preface

As the Central East Addiction Technology Transfer Center (Central East) has worked with addiction professionals over the years, the need for a self-care guide has been a frequent topic of discussion. There has been significant demand for a guide that can be used by agencies to create a more supportive work environment for employees and by the employees themselves, to enhance their own well-being and lead healthier, more productive professional and personal lives.

In response to this demand, the Central East set out in fall 2006 to develop a self-care guide to meet the needs of both agencies and employees. To ensure that this self-care guide addresses the needs of our target audience, the Central East utilized a process designed to gain input from individuals with significant experience working with addiction professionals and promoting healthier work environments. An advisory panel of experts in addiction-related services was convened to provide input on the content and format of the guide. The advisory panel provided input on specific topic areas and made recommendations on the steps both agencies and employees can take to promote self-care and a healthy work environment. This guide is based on the discussions conducted by the advisory panel and includes many of the specific suggestions made during those discussions.

Purpose of the Self-Care Guide

The goal of this guide is to identify workplace stressors for addiction professionals and provide strategies for both agencies and addiction professionals that can be used to address these stressors and promote self-care. Both agencies and employees have a role to play in this process. While agencies can take steps to reduce workplace stress and provide opportunities to enhance the health and well-being of their employees, it is ultimately the responsibility of employees to take the steps necessary to adopt a healthier lifestyle and engage in activities that promote well-being.

It is important to note that the suggestions in this guide are just that, suggestions. Every agency and individual has different needs and resources. No single approach is right for all agencies and individuals. Many of the suggested approaches are highly adaptable, allowing agencies and employees to select those aspects of an approach that best meet their needs.

It is also important to emphasize that there may be some situations in the workplace, such as funding cuts, new regulations, and increased demand for services, over which agencies and employees have little or no control. While little can be done to address these situations, some of the strategies suggested in the guide will help employees better adapt to emerging situations and minimize the negative impact on their professional performance and personal lives.

SECTION I:

Challenges in the Workplace

Goal of Section:

Identify work-related factors that can impact well-being

Why is the Workplace Stressful?

All work environments can have stressful aspects. Since for most of us, work is not an option but a necessity, most people cannot avoid the stress that they experience at work. Common stressors that all employees experience, no matter what the job or work environment, are listed below.

Relationships with Management

Even a good manager sometimes makes mistakes, and a bad manager can make many of mistakes. Managers can create stress in the workplace through poor management practices such as failing to provide appropriate supervision, providing unclear or no guidance on expected job performance, failing to establish and maintain necessary processes and procedures, and by showing favoritism. Even if a manager has strong management skills, he or she may lack the necessary interpersonal or "people" skills that are essential to a well-run workplace.

Relationships with Co-workers

Dealing with the many personalities that populate the workplace can create stress. As adults, many of us hope that the schoolyard antics of our younger years are far behind us. Unfortunately, many of the unpleasant characters from our past, the bully, gossip, and tattletale, show up in the workplace. There are also other characters, such as "the slacker" and people who take credit for the work of others, who are unique to the workplace. In addition, there can be personality conflicts between employees that are not related to job performance; some people just don't get along. While it is important to be professional and treat co-workers in a professional manner, dealing with the multiple personalities that make up the workplace can create stress.

Bureaucracy/Red Tape

In most jobs there are certain ways that things, must be done. Some of these procedures and processes make sense and increase efficiency; others may seem designed to complicate and lengthen the workday. Sometimes employees have no input into how things are run, but more

and more employers are listening to employees' suggestions about how to reduce bureaucracy and increase efficiency.

Performance Demands

We go to work to work, and while at work, we are expected to perform to a certain standard. Sometimes, these standards can be impossible to achieve, either because they are set too high or due to other circumstances. These circumstances can relate to the workplace, such as staffing changes, changes in processes and procedures, or changes in caseloads, or they can relate to individuals such as illness or personal problems that impact an employee's ability to do his or her job. Setting standards too low can also create problems. Not having enough work to do and low expectations on the part of management can significantly undermine productivity and create an unpleasant work environment.

Balancing Professional and Personal Life

We spend a significant amount of our time at work, making it easy for jobs to overlap with personal lives. This can have a huge impact on health and personal relationships. Learning to "leave work at work" and not take it home is important to maintaining a balance between the two.

What Additional Challenges Confront Addiction Professionals?

Addiction professionals face many challenges in their work that go beyond those previously stated. If strategies to address these challenges are not adopted at the agency and individual levels, significant stress, as well as other problems, can result.

Challenging Patient Population

Our clients have very complex, and sometimes overwhelming, lives. In addition to their addictions, they are often dealing with medical, legal, family, housing, and employment issues. Our job is to help our clients. Sometimes, it is possible to get overly involved in the needs of clients or overwhelmed trying to help a large number of extremely needy individuals. This can result in "burnout" or secondary stress disorder which is more commonly referred to as "compassion fatigue" (Figley, 1985).

Agencies Often Lack Adequate Resources

Addiction treatment agencies come in all shapes and sizes. Some are small community-based organizations; others are operated by State and local governments. Because of the demand for services, many of these providers,

whether from the public or private sector, have extremely tight budgets. This can impact the work environment in terms of large caseloads, low levels of compensation, and the ability of organizations to implement measures to support staff in their work (McLellan, Carise, & Kleber, 2003).

Lack of a Clear Career Path for Addiction Professionals

For many addiction professionals, it is unclear what steps they must take to advance in the profession. Some providers require specific licenses and credentials, while others hire people with significant experience on the street dealing with the target population. It is not uncommon for people to work their way up from volunteer positions to those with more responsibility. However, employees with significant experience sometimes get passed over for promotion in favor of those with higher degrees (Hoge et al., 2005).

This lack of a clear career path can lead to frustration and a lack of motivation among addiction professionals. Standardized positions and uniform requirements would help those working in the profession understand what steps are necessary to attain specific positions. With clearer guidance, more addiction professionals may be motivated to seek additional education and training (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).

Recovery Management

Many addiction professionals come to the field as a result of their own experience with addiction. According to a National Treatment Center Study released in 1999, which surveyed counselors in 400 treatment programs, roughly 60% percent of addiction counselors were in recovery (CSAT, 2006). This personal perspective can result in insight and empathy. However, it can also put those in recovery at risk of relapse. Every day, they deal with people who are struggling with addiction. Addiction professionals who are in recovery must be mindful of the risks and take appropriate steps to maintain their recovery. Working as an addiction professional does not constitute a personal plan of recovery.

Health Issues

Because of the nature of addiction there is a high rate of co-morbidity with other chronic conditions, such as depression, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis (CSAT, 1995). Professionals who are also in recovery may be dealing with these or other chronic diseases and infections as a result of their drug use. Most of these chronic diseases are manageable but may impact an individual's ability to perform their professional duties. Such conditions require regular, ongoing medical management, necessitating time off the job for medical appointments. Tensions can arise as employees who are not confronted by such health

issues are repeatedly asked to step in for their colleagues who must take time off. In addition, staff may suffer from conditions that are totally unrelated to prior addictions, such as asthma, diabetes, or high blood pressure, which also require accommodation.

High Burnout and Turnover Rates

Due to the various factors identified above, addiction professionals have very high turnover rates, an estimated 50 percent in some agencies (McLellan, Carise, & Kleber, 2003).

Therapists and counselors are highly susceptible to burnout and compassion fatigue due to some aspects of the job, such as the drain on remaining empathy and the high rate of relapse among clients. At times, success stories can be few and far between. This draining of empathy can limit the addiction professional's ability to help clients and affect treatment outcome (Rothschild & Rand, 2006).

Burnout and turnover can result in an endless cycle in the workplace: employees burn out due to work-related stresses; burnt-out employees seek other employment; and remaining employees face even higher caseloads, which creates even more work-related stress (IOM, 2004). To break this cycle, agencies and employees must address the work-related stress that may be the root cause of burnout.

Boundaries

Employees need a clear understanding of boundaries to do their jobs effectively and reduce the possibility of inappropriate client interactions and the stress resulting from such interactions. There are various types of boundaries that must be established and maintained. Employees need to know how much of themselves they can give to clients and the extent to which they can help them. Burnout can result from a lack of appropriate boundaries (Rothschild & Rand, 2006).

Employees also require training on how to deal with certain situations that may occur. For example, counselors, especially those working in smaller communities, may encounter clients outside of work. Agencies need to prepare staff for these encounters. For confidentiality reasons, staff should not initiate interactions with clients. However, if clients initiate encounters, employees could engage with clients, if they felt it was appropriate. Employees should be provided certain strategies, such as suggesting that clients call them the next workday if they need assistance. Such a strategy allows employees to maintain their personal time while still addressing the needs of the client.

It is important to remember that boundaries are two-sided. Employees must understand that they should not overstep the clients' boundaries,

but they must also be aware that they need to protect themselves and make sure that their own personal boundaries are maintained.

Professional/Ethical Standards

Most professions, such as physicians, journalists, and lawyers, have a specific professional code of ethics, which provides standards of behavior and principles related to moral and professional obligations. Codes guide the conduct of professionals in their interactions with clients, colleagues, and society in general. These codes are generally developed by professional societies. For example, NAADAC, the National Association of Addiction Professionals, has a code of ethics that address nine principles:

1) Non-discrimination
2) Client welfare
3) Client relationships
4) Trustworthiness
5) Compliance with law
6) Rights and duties
7) Dual relationships
8) Preventing harm
9) Duty to Care.

Source: www.naadac.org

Many of the challenges in the workplace are related to a violation of ethical standards. Some of these are intentional, but often, staff have not received training on what constitutes inappropriate or unprofessional behavior.

SECTION II:

Agency Role in Supporting Well-Being

Goal of Section:

Identify ways agencies can reduce stress in the workplace and support well-being of employees

There are many benefits to promoting well-being in the workplace. Employees who are physically and mentally healthy are often more productive, perform better, and are absent less often than other employees. (Aldana, 2001). This can result in better performance for the agency, better services for clients, and a less stressful and more supportive work environment for employees.

Creating a healthy, supportive, productive work environment is the responsibility of both employers and employees. One cannot do it without the help and cooperation of the other. Agencies and employees should work together on an ongoing basis to promote the well-being of all employees. The key to this process is communication and a willingness to listen. Strategies can be as simple as an old-fashioned suggestion box or more formal, such as an employee advisory committee.

The efforts of agencies to promote well-being in the workplace should focus on all staff, not just counselors. All employees, including receptionists, compliance technicians, nurses and physicians, and outreach workers can benefit from programs to promote well-being.

Organizationally, an agency must be prepared to support employees. Once an agency's staff begins to grow beyond a certain point, qualified, competent human resources professionals should be employed. These professionals are trained to address and resolve various issues within the workplace such as job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. Human resources professionals should receive ongoing training and have access to various tools and resources that can help them continually enhance the work environment.

Agencies should also not overlook the physical aspects of the workplace. To the extent possible, agencies should endeavor to create a comfortable work environment with comfortable furniture, good lighting, and adequate work and meeting space. If possible, amenities such as a quiet room, kitchen, and shower/changing facilities should be made available.

All agencies are different and have different resources and needs. No single approach will work in all workplaces. However, there are general approaches that agencies can implement.

❶ Flexibility

Conforming to a rigid schedule can create significant stress in employees' lives as they try to address personal needs related to their health, recovery, and family responsibilities or pursue additional education. Allowing flexibility in scheduling, such as multiple-shift options or flexibility in terms of when employees start and finish their workdays, allows employees to fit in medical appointments, AA or NA meetings, or pick up a child from daycare. Similarly, some flexibility during the workday, such as when employees take lunch, can also provide time for them to address their personal needs, such as going to the gym. The degree to which agencies can allow employees flexibility in their schedules will vary. Adopting a "flex-time" policy that adjusts but does not reduce the hours worked may be the most feasible to implement. It is important to note that some employees may take undue advantage of this increased flexibility. Processes should be in place to ensure that all employees put in a full workday. Whatever the policy, it should be clearly stated so staff are aware of what is and is not acceptable.

❷ Appropriate Supervision

Supervision is not simply a mechanism for determining whether employees are performing their jobs. Research suggests that in addition to providing an ongoing evaluation of skills, appropriate clinical supervision can reduce staff stress and increase motivation (Powell & Brodsky, 2004). Supervisors should be both well-trained in supervisory techniques and have the time necessary to supervise staff adequately. Both individual and group supervision should occur regularly.

Employees need regular, consistent feedback on both clinical and other work-related issues. This process should be both formal, with regularly scheduled sessions, and informal. Informal check-ins can take many forms. For example, supervisors may make a point of checking in with all staff at the end of the day when people are saying goodnight and preparing to go home. Supervisors should also watch their employees for signs that may indicate personal

☑ Providing Catch-Up Time

It is easy to get behind with paperwork and have things start piling up on the desk. It can be very hard to tackle this backlog during the course of a normal workday While it may sound contradictory to supporting staff, some employees prefer to catch up by working on the weekend a couple of times a year. This allows them to focus on the work without interruptions. Employers may want to consider setting up a policy allowing employees to do this and granting them a day off during their normal work week to compensate them for coming in over the weekend.

or health-related problems such as mood swings, weight gain or loss, tardiness, and absenteeism.

For addiction professionals, research suggests that it is important that supervisors also address the following:

- Relationships between recovering staff and clients
- Professional credibility
- Cultural bias and unfair treatment
- Staff performance evaluations
- Liability concerns
- Impaired counselors (CSAT, 2006).

❸ Professional Development

Agencies should encourage employees to pursue opportunities to build their skills and enhance their careers. Employees should receive training on professional and ethical standards so that they have an understanding of the agency's expectations concerning professional conduct. Agencies should also foster an environment that encourages professional growth. Some agencies may have the resources to help employees pursue additional education by providing tuition reimbursement and additional time off to attend classes.

Not all employees will want or need to pursue additional education but they can still benefit from learning new skills. Agencies can provide in-service training or continuing education opportunities. Employees can also attend outside trainings and conferences and bring these skills back to other employees through presentations and in-house trainings. On-the-job training, such as assigning new responsibilities (with appropriate supervision), can also empower employees and help them grow professionally.

❹ Professional and Ethical Standards

Agencies should develop their own rules of conduct, provide appropriate training to staff, and ensure that these rules are universally observed and enforced.

Traits Addiction Professionals Should Exhibit

- Familiarity with mandatory reporting requirements
- Adherence to professional standards and scope of practice
- Knowledge of the difference between a clinical relationship and that of a peer counselor or sponsor to a client
- Willingness to use clinical supervision and peer assessments to gain insights into clinical performance, especially deficiencies
- Awareness of current research and trends in addiction and related fields
- Involvement in professional organizations
- Respect for clients from diverse backgrounds

- Recognition of the effect personal bias toward other cultures and lifestyles can have on treatment
- Understanding of personal recovery and its effect on the provision of treatment
- Capacity to conduct self evaluation
- Participation in regular continuing education
- Use of self-care strategies

Source: SAMHSA, CSAT, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 46, Substance Abuse: Administrative Issues in Outpatient Treatment

Minimum Professional and Ethical Responsibilities for Addiction Professionals

- Adhere to established professional codes of ethics that define the professional context within which the counselor works in order to maintain professional standards and safeguard the client.
- Adhere to Federal and State laws and agency regulations regarding the treatment of substance use disorders.
- Interpret and apply information from current counseling and psychoactive substance use research literature to improve client care and enhance professsional growth.
- Recognize the importance of individual differences that influence client behavior and apply this understanding to clinical practice.
- Utilize a range of supervisory options to process personal feelings and concerns about clients.
- Conduct self-evaluations of professional performance applying ethical, legal, and professional standards to enhance self-awareness and performance.
- Obtain appropriate continuing professional education.
- Participate in ongoing supervision and consultation.
- Develop and utilize strategies to maintain one's own physical and mental health.

Source: SAMHSA, CSAT Technical Assistance Publication (TAP) 21: Addiction Counseling Competencies: The Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Professional Practice

❺ Encourage Well-Being in the Workplace

Agencies can play an important role in encouraging and facilitating self care. Part of this is creating an organizational culture that values and promotes self care. There are also concrete things agencies can do. For example, to encourage employees to eat right, agencies can provide information andtraining on nutrition and provide healthy snacks at work-related events. Agencies can provide bottle water throughout the office to make sure employees stay well hydrated. To encourage exercise, agencies can subsidize gym memberships, pay initiation fees, obtain group rates, or provide on-site opportunities for exercise such as yoga classes and walking programs. Agencies can also provide information to employees or hold in-service training on activities that promote mental wellness such as meditation, relaxation techniques, and stress-reduction techniques such as journaling.

Many agencies have employee assistance programs in place that provide employees access to mental health and other support services. Agencies can also offer activities that provide "mental health breaks" to employees, such as the following.

☑ Creating a Culture of Wellness

- **Maintain a Strong Commitment to Well-Being.** Have a genuine interest in employees and an ongoing commitment to their well-being.
- **Provide Information**. Employees need information on their options when it comes to self-care. In addition to making information available, management and supervisors should foster resourcefulness on the part of employees and empower them to address their own needs.
- **Provide Role Models**. Management and supervisors should model healthy behaviors. The agency should create a culture of wellness from the top down.
- **Respond to Stressful Events**. Agencies should be mindful of events that increase stress in the workplace and be prepared to provide additional support to employees. For example, the death of a fellow employee or client should be acknowledged and support provided to help employees mourn such losses. Agencies should also consider building in support activities in relation to specific events, such as HIV testing initiatives when employees will be giving out a large number of test results in a very short period of time. Opportunities to discuss what happened and decompress should be built into the process.

Retreats

Many agencies hold annual (or more frequent) retreats for their employees. These retreats are designed to give employees a chance to relax, rejuvenate, and develop skills that promote mental wellness (see Sample Retreat Agenda in Appendix).

Special Events

Agencies plan a variety of special events for employees that allow them to "blow off steam" and enjoy each others' company in a non-work-related environment. These activities include outings such as picnics and bowling. Even onsite events, such as birthday parties, can significantly boost staff morale.

6 Support Staff in Recovery

Supporting staff in recovery can play a critial role in maintaining staff motivation and morale. The degree to which agencies can support their employees in recovery varies. Some agencies choose to incorporate recovery into their general wellness-related activities instead of having separate activities and programs for employees

Laws Relating to the Hiring of Staff in Recovery

There are two Federal laws that protect certain individuals with substance use disorders from discrimination in employment. These are:

- Federal Rehabilitation Act (29 United States Code [U.S.C.] 791 et seq. [1973])
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. [1992]).

These laws protect people with a history of substance use disorders, some people who currently abuse substances, and people who are receiving treatment. There are also laws in some States that protect people who formerly and/or currently abuse substances. Not all programs are subject to these laws.

In general, the laws:

- Regard people with substance use disorders as individuals with disabilities but distinguish between individuals who are in recovery and those who currently abuse substances and between alcohol abuse and illegal drug abuse
- Protect people who abused alcohol and drugs in the past and are in recovery
- Provide limited protection against employment discrimination to people who currently abuse alcohol but who can perform the requisite job duties and do not pose a direct threat to the health, safety, or property of others in the workplace

(continued on page 16)

(continued from page 15)

- Do not protect people currently abusing illegal drugs, even if they are qualified and do not pose a direct threat to others in the workplace
- Protect people who are participating in a supervised rehabilitation program and no longer are engaged in drug or alcohol abuse
- Protect only those people who are qualified for employment (i.e., an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position)

In addition, the laws prohibit the use of standards or other selection criteria that screen out individuals with a disability unless these standards or criteria are shown to be job related and necessary for conducting business. The laws also prohibit pre-employment medical examinations or inquiries about applicants' disabilities unless it is shown to be job-related and consistent with the needs of the business.

Federal laws can change, and State laws can vary. Agencies should take steps to make sure their policies and practices are in accordance with existing laws through their human resources department or by consulting legal counsel.

Source: SAMHSA, CSAT, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 46, Substance Abuse: Adminitrative Issues in Outpatient Treatment

in recovery. Other agencies may hold support groups on site or provide opportunities for staff to attend AA or NA meetings.

Agencies should have a policy in place about the length of time counselors must be in recovery before being hired. People who have been in recovery less than a year are generally not hired for counseling positions. However, non-counseling or volunteer positions may be appropriate for people in early recovery (CSAT, 2006).

SECTION III:

Self-Care Approaches

Goal of Section:

Identify some of the self-care approaches employees can use to increase their own well-being.

This section identifies specific areas where employees can take steps to improve their well-being. Eating better, regular exercise, and taking steps to enhance mental well-being can all have a significant impact on overall health and personal outlook. There is also a lot of overlap across the topics identified below. For example, regular exercise can reduce stress, which increases mental wellness. Exercise can also address some of the negative impacts of an unhealthy diet (if you can not change it). Finding a balance is important.

The areas identified below are good places to start. However, they are not the only ways to increase well-being. Personal happiness and well-being can be derived from various sources, whether a hobby, quality time with family or a significant other, or a rewarding volunteer commitment. This guide is designed to get you started in the right direction, but you should not limit your self-care efforts to the suggestions in this guide.

Agencies can certainly play a role in supporting self care. The degree to which agencies can do this depends on their resources. Responses can vary from providing information on community resources to providing significant in-house support. Agencies can take steps to help employees increase their well-being but ultimately, it is up to the individual to decide the extent to which they will take advantage of these opportunities.

Topics:

- Nutrition*
- Exercise/Health Promotion*
- Mental Wellness
- Recovery Management

❶ Nutrition

A healthy diet is one that provides enough of each essential nutrient, contains a variety of foods from all of the basic food groups, provides adequate energy, and does not contain excess fat, sugar, and salt. There are many reasons to maintain a healthy diet. These include:

- Improved health
- Increased energy
- Managing weight gain
- Preventing and managing diseases and disorders

**The information contained in this section, particularly as it relates to Nutrition and Exercise are suggestions based on current research and discussion with Central East ATTCs' Advisory Panel. This information should not be used as a substitute for the opinions of trained medical professionals. Before changing any diet or exercise routine it is recommended that you consult a medical professional.*

There is an obesity epidemic in the United States. Results from the 2003–2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) show that an estimated 66.2 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. This represents an increase of 18 percent compared with the estimates from an earlier survey (NHANES III 1988–1994). This epidemic is attributed to the overconsumption of high-calorie food and a sedentary lifestyle (CDC, 2004).

Even though eating healthy food can make us feel better, it is not always easy. Sometimes it seems much easier to grab a quick meal at a fast food restaurant instead of packing a healthy lunch at home. It can also be hard to say no when your co-workers are indulging in unhealthy snacks. It is important to remember that even little changes in diet can make a difference and big changes can make a big difference. Below are steps you can take to improve your diet.

Learn about Nutrition

There are lots of ways to learn about healthy eating. Information is available from books and websites. For those who prefer to learn through classes,

How does healthy eating help addiction professionals?

Today, we live in a fast-paced world where everything must happen "now". The addictions field is no different. Customers come into treatment on a voluntary or mandated basis. They come with the expectation that “I am going to be fixed now.” The program staff want to help, but oftentimes are burdened with their own addictions, stress, or physical problems. Many of these issues can be helped through healthy life choices, continuing education, accepting that they can help a person only when that person is ready, and monitoring their own health.

On any given day across this country, one can observe an addiction professional standing in front of a facility smoking a cigarette, drinking a cup of coffee, soda, or eating an unhealthy snack. Many eat sugary treats and high-calorie foods with little nutritional value throughout the day and before the day is over, they are too tired to provide services effectively. They are irritable, tired, and not focused on the needs of the customers. This, in my opinion, causes stress, burnout, and numerous health problems that can be prevented through healthy eating and lifestyle changes. In my conversations with addiction practitioners many have stated that they have health problems (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, gout, severe arthritis, headaches, hair loss, and chronic fatigue syndrome).

This brought me to the conclusion that food plays a major role in how we do our jobs and treat our customers. Here are some

many are available. Many organizations offer classes on nutrition, healthy eating, and food preparation.

Don't Get Overwhelmed

There are literally thousands of diets and approaches to weight loss. Just look on the Best Sellers list or a magazine rack and you will be confronted with 10 to 20 of the latest diets. Before starting a diet, be sure to research your options and consider discussing it with your physician. Consider various aspects of the diet, such as whether it will require you to prepare special foods in addition to the food you prepare for your family and the cost of the food the diet recommends. Also, the length of time you will be on the diet is a consideration. Consider whether you will stick to the diet for 30 days, 3 months, or 6 months. If the diet is not right for your lifestyle, it can be hard to maintain.

Consider What You are Eating

Get in the habit of reading labels and looking at the nutritional information on packages. Many restaurants also make nutritional information available. Knowing what you are eating can help you make healthy choices.

suggestions on what I believe, through research and my personal experiences with food and changing my own lifestyle, can help other addiction professionals:

- Limit or eliminate all caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, sodas, energy drinks) during the workday
  - *Drink more water, fruit juices, health drinks, decaffeinated tea*
- Cut down or eliminate sugary snacks (donuts/pastries, cakes, pies, candy individual pieces and bars, salty snacks)
  - *Eat healthy snacks: sliced vegetables, fruit (fresh/dried), granola, fiber, fruit bars, salt-free snacks and nuts*
- Eliminate eating fast-food
- Monitor food portions throughout the day:
  - *Morning: bottled water, bowl of cereal, cup of fruit or yogurt, breakfast sandwich, bagel, protein or fruit drink or granola bar*
  - *Mid-day snack: bottled water, piece of fruit, granola/health bar*
  - *Lunch: bottled water, fruit/vegetable plate, fresh green salad with fresh vegetables or tuna/chicken, sandwich (meat of choice) on multi-grain bread with greens, piece of fruit, healthy snack, protein drink, or light portion control frozen meals*
  - *Mid afternoon snack: bottle of water, piece of fruit, granola health bar, salt-free snack*
- Decrease or eliminate smoking and alcohol intake
- Take a walk outside of your office or around the block during the day. The fresh air will stimulate oxygen and help increase energy to maintain workload.

Valerie E. Robinson, MS, LPC

Don't Forget Water

Keeping the body well hydrated can have a significant impact on health. Almost two-thirds of our body weight is water. Water is necessary to digest food and absorb vitamins and nutrients. It plays a role in detoxifying the liver and kidneys and removing waste and toxins from the body. If you are dehydrated, the body must work harder to circulate the blood, leaving you less energy to do the things you want and need to do.

How much water should you drink? The general rule is eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day. Another way to determine how many ounces of water you should drink a day is to divide your weight by two. For example, if you weigh 150 pounds you should drink 75 ounces of water a day (150 divided by 2 is 75).

Tips for Staying Hydrated

- Avoid drinking liquids such as coffee, tea, or soda, which often contain caffeine. These can actually result in the loss of water from the body since caffeine is a diuretic.
- When you are exercising remember to drink plenty of water before, during, and after to compensate for the water that you may lose through perspiration.
- Drink before you feel thirsty. You are already dehydrated when you feel thirsty.
- Keep a bottle of water with you at all times.
- Make water available in places were you spend a significant amount of your time, like work. Consider setting up a water club at the office and sharing the cost of having bottled water delivered.

Portion Size

In addition to watching what you eat, you need to watch how much you eat. America's obesity epidemic has been attributed not only to *what* we are eating but *how much* we are eating. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) statistics indicate that the total daily caloric intake for Americans has risen from 1,854 to 2,002 calories over the last 20 years. This increase, 148 calories per day, works out to an extra 15 pounds every year (DHHS/USDA, 2005). Techniques for limiting portion size include weighing your food, checking the serving sizes on packages, and avoiding "Super Sizing."

Plan to Eat Right

Eating right doesn't just happen, you need to plan for it. This can take the form of taking your lunch to work or having healthy snacks, such as fruits, carrot sticks, or nuts, at your desk so you can avoid the temptation of buying a candy bar or soda. If you are going to an event where you know there will be unhealthy food, have a healthy snack before you arrive. It is much easier to resist temptation if you are not hungry.

Recruit Others to Eat Healthy

It is much easier to eat healthy foods if others around you are doing the same. Consider recruiting a friend or co-worker and motivating each other to make healthy nutritional choices.

Encourage your employer to provide healthy snacks at meetings and work-related functions (or at least some healthy alternatives).

Get Help

Not everyone can change eating habits on their own. There are numerous programs available to help people adopt healthier eating habits. Some of these, such as Weight Watchers®, have fees associated with their services. Others are available at no cost.

Resources

American Dietetic Association
ADA's Knowledge Center provides timely and objective food and nutrition information.
www.eatright.org

TheDietChannel.com
A health, nutrition and weight loss resource that features links, and reviews of popular diet programs, as well as articles and other information on nutrition and weight loss.
www.thedietchannel.com

Nutrition.gov
A clearinghouse of U.S. Government information on food and nutrition. Includes information on weight management; shopping, cooking, and meal planning; nutrition and health issues; and dietary supplements.
www.nutrition.gov

❷ Exercise/Health Promotion

"Life belongs to God and health belongs to you!" – Dr. Nan Lu

There are some aspects of our health over which we have no control, such as genetics and environment. However, there are many things that can be done to positively impact health and well-being. Exercise and other steps, like stopping smoking (see Smoking Cessation in Appendix), can significantly enhance overall health and prevent the development of health-related problems in the future.

An important aspect of wellness is to take the necessary steps to monitor your health. This includes regular physical exams and the recommended screenings for your age group (such as cholesterol screenings, mammograms, and prostate exams). By detecting health-related problems early, through regular physical exams, intervention can begin earlier and hopefully address problems before they become serious.

Physical activity has been shown to be the single most important factor in successful weight maintenance. In addition to limiting weight gain, exercise can reduce the risk of many serious health-related conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

Regular physical activity has also been shown to reduce anxiety and depression and to improve mood. In addition, the loss of strength and stamina often attributed to aging is partly caused by reduced physical activity. All of these benefits can translate into better performance on the job (as well as in one's personal life).

Getting Started

Physical Check Up. Before you begin any exercise regimen check with your doctor to make sure that your plans are appropriate and will not result in any complications.

Select the Right Activity. There are many different types of exercises: walking, running, biking, aerobics, swimming, and team sports. Choosing an activity you enjoy can greatly impact whether you stick with your exercise routine. Don't be afraid to try something new and consider incorporating more than one activity into your routine. Engaging in several activities makes things more interesting and can reduce the chance of injuries.

Start Slow. Plan to start slowly and gradually build up over time, especially if you have not exercised for a while. Injury can result if you try to start too fast.

Keep it Interesting. Some people thrive on the same routine but for many, doing the same thing every time can get boring. Explore ways to keep your exercise routine interesting. For example, find a workout partner or bring your favorite music to the gym.

Common Excuses for Not Exercising

I don't have enough time.
It's too hot (or too cold) outside.
I have a health condition that keeps me from exercising.
I'm too old to start exercising.
I don't have the right shoes and clothing.
I don't enjoy it.
It's too boring.
It leaves me too tired to do the things I need to do.
It takes time away from my family.

Resources

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
The web site includes links to the resources from government agencies as well as to health and fitness organizations.
www.fitness.gov

Physical Fitness is for Everyone
This CDC fact sheet includes: tips for being more active; risks of being active; tips for avoiding activity-induced injuries; and information on overcoming barriers to physical activity.
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical

Shape Up America!
Shape Up America! is committed to raising awareness of obesity as a health issue and providing responsible information on healthy weight management. The web site includes numerous resources and assessments to help people determine readiness for physical activity, overcome common barriers to physical activity, and design a fitness plan.
www.shapeup.org/index.php

❸ Mental Wellness

"Helpers have a hard time asking for help. You cannot continue to give unless you receive."
– LaShaun Evans

Addiction professionals work in a demanding and stressful environment, and in order to provide optimal services to clients, they must be mentally healthy. Counselors or outreach workers who are struggling with stress or depression may be unable to respond to their clients needs, and in this line of work, that can have serious repercussions. Therefore, it is imperative that addiction professionals develop a regimen of self-care that promotes mental wellness.

Everyone should take steps to promote mental wellness. We live in a very stressful society, and addiction professionals have stressful jobs. There are other factors that can impact mental well-being.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reports that an estimated 26.2 percent of Americans, ages 18 and older, approximately one in four adults, suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year (NIMH, 2007). While mental disorders are fairly widespread in the population, a much smaller proportion of the population, about 6 percent, suffer from a serious mental illness. Mental disorders are

☑ Make Healthy Decisions

Regular Check Up
Even if you feel healthy, do not neglect to see your doctor for regular check ups. Be sure you receive the screenings recommended for your age.

Take your Medications
If you are on medications for a chronic condition such as HIV disease, hepatitis, diabetes, or high blood pressure, be sure to take your medication regularly and not skip doses.

Stay Home when Sick
For various reasons, people still come to work when they are sick. This can compromise your own health and also put the health of clients and co-workers at risk. If you are sick, seek appropriate care and stay home until you recover.

Infectious Disease Precautions
Some clients may have infectious diseases, such as HIV, hepatitis, and tuberculosis (TB). Employees should always use universal precautions.

Maintaining Boundaries

The patients we work with almost always lack boundaries, usually specific to histories of abuse, family of origin and life experiences in their addiction. To maintain a healthy but therapeutic (helpful) relationship with clients, professionals in the field of addiction need to maintain their own boundaries as well.

We have always heard: "that person will push your buttons." When this happens it is due to a lack of boundaries or unresolved issues on the part of the professional. Clients cannot push buttons that are healed and not obvious to them.

Most human beings' unresolved issues stem from life experiences and clients may pick up on these. Many individuals working in the field of addiction are recovering themselves. Being in recovery can help professionals empathize with the client; however, it can also cause problems in the therapeutic relationship if the professionals have unresolved issues related to their own addiction.

Addiction professionals are more effective maintaining boundaries when they have resolved or are working on their own issues. Picture us with a shield all around us. The shield has "holes" which are our issues. The more the leading cause of disability in the United States. Just because you are a behavioral health professional doesn't mean you are immune to mental health disorders.

It is crucial to know the signs that indicate you may need help from a mental health professional. In particular, if you have thoughts about hurting yourself or someone else, you should seek care from a mental health professional. Other key signs include symptoms that:

- Disrupt performance of regular activities
- Become markedly more severe
- Become a regular pattern instead of an intermittent occurrence
- Increase in number

While there is no substitute for treatment for a diagnosed (or undiagnosed) mental disorder, because of the nature of the work, addiction professionals should employ specific strategies to enhance mental well-being.

Set Boundaries

As discussed earlier, it is essential to maintain boundaries in interactions with clients. These boundaries must apply to the level of emotional engagement, professional ethics, and interactions with clients outside the workplace. Failure to observe these boundaries can create significant job-related stress, severely

impact professional performance, and compromise the quality of care provided to clients.

Conduct Regular Self-Assessments*

How am I doing? Employees should regularly check in with themselves to assess their mental well-being. Because of the stressful, fast-paced environment, it is easy to overlook things that need to be acknowledged. Self-assessments can help employees to step back and grieve a loss or celebrate an accomplishment that may have otherwise been overlooked. It can also help employees keep tabs on their overall self-care efforts and ask questions like, "Am I taking the office home with me?" "Am I eating right?" or "Have I been letting the boundaries with clients slip?"

Create Personal Rituals

Some counselors rely on personal rituals to help clear their minds and refocus their thoughts. These rituals can be performed at the start of the day, between client visits, or at the end of the day. For example, one visualization technique some counselors perform between clients is to imagine they are enclosed in a bubble. The positive energy from the counselor can travel through the bubble to the client. However, any negative energy from the client is stopped by the bubble. Others have

**Examples of stress self-assessment tools can be found in the Appendix.*

they are resolved, the smaller the holes in which clients can get through and push our buttons. More importantly, the smaller these holes the healthier the employee will be maintaining boundaries with the client. When these holes are not resolved or maintained at a healthy level, we will almost always invade the clients' boundaries.

The most important point to all of this is the fact that we are all human beings on a life road of growing and learning. Take notice of specific areas where you feel that you have invaded a client's boundaries and the areas in which clients continue "push our buttons" and there you will find the areas in which you need a little more growth.

Walter Williams
Executive Director, Synergy Treatment Centers, Inc.

a specific ritual for the end of the day, such as making a "To Do" list for the next day, to help ensure that work is left at the office and not brought home.

Take a "Mental Health" Break between Clients

Whether you are performing a specific ritual or just taking a break, try to take a few minutes between clients, to decompress, relax, and refocus.

Learn to Relax

While at one time it may have been an innate skill, many of us have long since forgotten how to relax. Fortunately, it is possible to relearn this skill. Various exercises, centered on meditation, grounding, and muscle relaxation, can greatly enhance mental wellness. Increased ability to relax will have multiple benefits, including improved sleep and better physical health.

The Importance of Spirituality

Spirituality has been generally defined as a "search for the sacred," and typically emphasizes the boundaries of human material existence (Miller, 1998). However, spirituality can mean different things to different people and it is not easy to define for most.

For the purposes of this guide, we will not attempt to define it. What can be said is that spirituality is intensely personal. It is also, many will argue, crucial to well-being.

Key elements of spirituality may include:

- Development of greater self-awareness
- Seeking out interconnectedness
- A relationship with a higher power

Some people choose to take an individualized approach to spirituality while others seek out the fellowship of others.

As for recognizing spirituality in the workplace, the key words are *tolerance* and *deversity*, celebrating spirituality within different cultures, religions, and traditions. Some agencies have explored spirituality by planning presentations on various religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, etc. such presentations help demystify religions and can help employees focus on the common elements that all religions share.

Agencies should also ask employees to help identify their spiritual needs. Involving employees in this process can help agencies better meet the spiritual needs of employees in the workplace. For example, employees may request that space be dedicated for a quiet room, which could be used for meditation and prayer during the day.

Recommended readings on spirituality:

The Spirituality of Imperfection, Storytelling and Journey to Wholeness, by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham

Care of the Soul, A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life, by Thomas Moore

Conduct Your Own Personal Retreats

You don't have to wait for your agency to hold a retreat. In many communities there are non-profit organizations that offer activities designed for rejuvenation. Some of these organizations have a spiritual focus. Even if you cannot find an organization that offers individual retreats, consider planning your own, perhaps a massage, hiking in the woods, or reading an inspirational book.

Make Time Outside of Work

Modern life is increasingly busy. Just because you are off work doesn't mean you are relaxing; you may be doing your "other" job of taking care of family and personal responsibilities. Schedule times to do things you enjoy, whether it is dinner out in a restaurant and a movie, an art class, book group, or regular exercise.

Build a Support Network with Fellow Employees

Some people find it helpful to maintain close relationships with one or two co-workers who provide support, feedback, as well as a regular opportunity to check in on issues related to professional integrity.

Dealing with Stress

As discussed earlier, addiction professionals experience many stressors in the workplace. In addition to job-related stress, stress can also be generated from circumstances in our personal lives.

Stress can be brief and highly situational or it can be more persistent. Stress can become a serious problem if it begins to interfere with normal activities and lasts for an extended period. High levels of stress can result in fatigue, inability to concentrate, and irritability.

It is possible to manage stress. The following steps can help reduce the level of stress in your life.

Identify the Cause

Explore why you feel stressed and the source of this stress. It may be possible to address the source of stress in your life. Even if you cannot alleviate the stress, you can develop a plan for minimizing it.

Monitor Moods

Try to determine when, where, and why you are feeling stressed. This can help you identify stressful situations so you can take steps to address or avoid them.

(continued on page 28)

(continued from page 27)

Give Yourself Time
Personal time can allow you to take a step back from stressful situations and rejuvenate. Consider taking a few minutes several times a day. Set aside longer periods several times a week. Use this time to relax, meditate, exercise, look at a magazine, or engage in some other form of mental "escape".

Manage Anger
Employ anger management techniques such as counting to ten or taking a walk, in order to avoid emotional outbursts, which can greatly increase stress.

Consider your Priorities
An overly full schedule and too many responsibilities can create stress. Review your responsibilities and prioritize them, consider delegating or eliminating those that are less important.

Cut Yourself some Slack
Perfectionists are often very stressed-out people. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others.

Source: American Psychological Association, www.apa.org

Seek Professional Support
Many mental health and addiction professionals find it beneficial to participate in support groups designed specifically for "helping" professionals. Others benefit from individual sessions with a therapist. Just because you spend all day helping others, it doesn't mean that you cannot benefit from help.

Resources
American Psychological Association Help Center
APA's Help Center provides brochures, tips, and articles on the psychological issues that affect physical and emotional well-being and provides information about referrals.
http://helping.apa.org

National Institute of Mental Health
Includes information on research and treatment of mental health disorders and provides resources related to mental wellness, including a services locator.
www.nimh.nih.gov/nimhhome/index.cfm

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services
Information on mental health, including a treatment locator.
http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs

4 Recovery Management

Research indicates that approximately 60 percent of addiction professionals are in recovery (CSAT, 2006). This translates into a significant workplace issue: how to keep people in recovery when they work in an environment where they are constantly coming into contact with current and former addicts. Addiction professionals may also adopt the attitude that because of their professional background, they are better prepared to avoid relapse than other people in recovery. These factors, coupled with the already stressful environment in which addiction professionals work, make recovery management a crucial issue for both agencies and employees.

Agencies have adopted different approaches to addressing recovery. Some choose to have specific activties for people in recovery, such as onsite support groups or providing flex time to attend meetings. Other agencies incorporate recovery management into their overall wellness activities and do not provide specific services for employees in recovery.

Possible Signs of Relapse

- Change in work attendance or performance
- Alteration of personal appearance
- Mood swings or attitude changes
- Withdrawal from responsibility or contact with associates
- Unusual patterns of behavior
- Defensive attitude concerning addiction

Resources

Recovery Community Services Program
This is a SAMHSA-supported program in which peer-to-peer recovery support services are provided to help people initiate and/or sustain recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders.
http://rcsp.samhsa.gov/index.htm

Faces & Voices of Recovery
Faces & Voices of Recovery is a national organization of individuals and organizations coming together to support local, state, regional and national recovery advocacy by increasing access to research, policy, organizing, and technical support; facilitating relationships among local and regional groups; improving access to policymakers and the media; and providing a national rallying point for recovery advocates.
www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

National Drug Addiction Recovery Month
The *Recovery Month* effort aims to promote the societal benefits of alcohol and drug use disorder treatment, laud the contributions of treatment providers and promote the message that recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders in all its forms is possible.
www.recoverymonth.gov

Working as an Addiction Professional Is Not a Plan of Personal Recovery

A fundamental principle of all 12-step and many faith-based addiction recovery programs is a belief that a person in “continuous-sustained recovery” must commit to working with others in “early recovery” in order to maintain their own individual sobriety or "clean time". This principle is referred to as “12–step or service work,” and is often characterized by the phrase “you can only keep what you have by giving it away.” This practice can be traced to AA’s co-founder Bill Wilson and one of his early experiences. One evening, after experiencing a severe urge to drink, Mr. Wilson frantically began phoning local Akron, OH, hospitals in search of a “suffering alcoholic” with whom he could share his “road to recovery” experiences. Mr. Wilson believed that in order for him to overcome his urge to drink and to remain sober, he would have to “work with others” who were struggling to find sobriety. Some 53 years later, this practice continues to be a mainstay of the addiction recovery community. It is a fundamental principle highlighted throughout the 12th step of most, if not all, "anonymous" programs.

Addiction professionals who are also members of the addiction recovery community must be careful not to confuse their work as professional addiction counselors with their commitment to “service work.” So often, many among this group mistake their professional work with service work. Working as an addiction professional does not constitute a program of personal recovery. This error in judgment can be costly, resulting in a disconnect from their personal support system and possibly leading to relapse to substance use. A common sign suggesting the possible blurring of this fine line can be found in comments such as: “I don’t have to go to meetings any more because I work with newcomers daily in my profession as a counselor,” or “I keep what I have through my work as an addiction counselor.” Being employed in treatment is not the same as, “working with newcomers.” One is a profession; the other a livelihood. For the protection of those who are in recovery and employed as treatment professionals, this understanding must be made clear. It may be the difference between a long and prosperous career and a return to active addiction, or worse, death, since relapse can also be fatal.

David Whiters
Executive Director, Recovery Consultants of Atlanta, Inc.

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Appendices

Sample Retreat Agenda

Smoking Cessation

Stress Style Test

Choosing a Relaxer

Coping Index

Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers

Sample Retreat Agenda

Annual Staff Retreat

AGENDA

9:30 am	Continental Breakfast
9:50 am	Welcome and overview of AGENDA
	Overview of Retreat
	a. What is a retreat?
	b. Why are we having a retreat?
	c. What we plan to accomplish.
10:30 am	History of the Organization
11:15 am	Board of Directors Presentation Getting-to-Know-You exercise, Facilitated by Board members
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:45 pm	Strategies for improving overall mental, physical and spiritual health of staff – with special emphasis on recovering staff
2:00 pm	Strategies for improving overall effectiveness of stall
3:00 pm	Review, feedback and completion of evaluations
3:30 pm	Adjourn

Smoking Cessation

In 2005, 45.1 million adults (20.9%) in the United States were current smokers: 23.9 percent of men and 18.1 percent of women. An estimated 70 percent of these smokers said they wanted to quit (CDC, 2006). Smoking has been linked to numerous diseases including: abdominal aortic aneurysm; acute myeloid leukemia; cancer (bladder, cervical, esophageal, kidney, laryngeal, lung, oral, pancreatic, stomach, and throat); cardiovascular diseases; cataract; chronic lung diseases; coronary heart; pneumonia; and periodontitis. Smoke from other people's cigarettes, known as secondhand smoke, also causes lung cancer (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004).

It is no secret that many people with addictions to alcohol and other drugs are also smokers, there is a very high rate of co-addiction (Anthony & Wagner, 2000). Current research has also begun to suggest that smoking is a predictor of alcohol and substance abuse (McKee, Falba, O'Malley, Sindelar, & O'Connor, 2007). This means that many people in recovery also smoke. While they have been able stop drinking or using drugs, many continue to smoke.

Ask anyone who has tried, quitting smoking is not easy. Studies have shown that there are specific steps to quitting smoking. These include preparing (readiness); identifying support; learning new skills and behaviors; getting medication if necessary; and preparing for relapse.

If you are thinking about quitting, consider attempting it at a time when stress levels are low. It could be too much to take on during times of financial, work-related, or relationship stress.

Also consider a visit to your physician if you are thinking about quitting. Physicians can suggest medicine to help with withdrawal, some of which can be purchased over the counter while others require a prescription. There are also programs and support groups available to help people stop smoking.

Resources

Smokefree.gov
This HHS site includes an online guide to quitting.
www.smokefree.gov

Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS)
CDC website that includes resources on prevention and smoking cessation.
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm

American Lung Association
www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=22931

Dr. Jeff's Quit Commit Program for Smoking Cessation
This user friendly website helps people of all ages quit smoking cigarettes.
www.quitcommit.com

Stress Style Test

Created by Daniel Goleman, PhD

Imagine yourself in a stressful situation. When you are feeling anxious, what do you typically experience? Check all that apply.

____ 1. My heart beats faster.

____ 2. I find it difficult to concentrate because of distracting thoughts.

____ 3. I worry too much about things that don't really matter.

____ 4. I feel jittery.

____ 5. I get diarrhea.

____ 6. I imagine terrifying scenes.

____ 7. I can't keep anxiety-provoking pictures and images out of my mind.

____ 8. My stomach gets tense.

____ 9. I pace up and down nervously.

____ 10. I am bothered by unimportant thoughts running through my mind.

____ 11. I become immobilized.

____ 12. I feel I am losing out on things because I can't make decisions fast enough.

____ 13. I perspire.

____ 14. I can't stop thinking worrisome thoughts.

Give yourself a "mind" point if you checked the following questions: 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 14.

Mind Total: _____

Give yourself a "body" point if you checked the following questions: 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 13.

Body Total: _____

Form can be downloaded at www.ceattc.org.

Choosing a Relaxer

Body

If stress registers mainly in your body, you will need a remedy that will break up the physical tension pattern. This may be a vigorous body workout but a slow-paced, even lazy, muscle relaxer may be equally effective. Here are some suggestions.

- Aerobics
- Progressive relaxation
- Swimming
- Biking
- Rowing
- Running
- Walking
- Yoga
- Massage
- Soaking in a hot tub
- Deep breathing
- Golf

Mind

If you experience stress as an invasion of worrisome thoughts, the most direct intervention is anything that will engage your mind completely and redirect it, such as meditation. On the other hand, some people find that the sheer exertion of physical exercise unhooks the mind wonderfully and is very effective therapy. Here are some suggestions.

- Meditation
- Exercise
- Reading
- Crosswords, puzzles
- TV, movies
- Games, such as chess and cards
- Knitting and sewing
- Carpentry, handicrafts
- Any absorbing hobby
- Creative imagery

Mind/Body

If you are a mixed type, you may want to try a physical activity that also demands mental rigor.

- Competitive sports (tennis, racquetball, squash, volleyball)
- Any combination of mind and body activity

Coping Index

____ 1. If you have a supportive family, give yourself 10 points.

____ 2. If you pursue a hobby at least 1–2 hours a week, give yourself 10 points.

____ 3. If you attend a social activity at lease once per week, give yourself 10 points.

____ 4. If you are within 15 pounds of your ideal weight, give yourself 15 points.

____ 5. If you do at least 90 minutes of deep relaxation or meditation per week, give yourself 10 points.

____ 6. For each day per week you perform at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, give yourself 5 points.

____ 7. For each balanced meal you eat per day, give yourself 5 points (figure your average day, up to a total of 15 points)

____ 8. If you do at least one activity per week "just for you," give yourself 10 points.

____ 9. If you have a place in your home where you can relax without interruptions, give yourself 10 points.

____ 10. If you use a time management program or process regularly, give yourself 10 points.

____ 11. For each pack of cigarettes that you smoke per day, subtract 10 points.

____ 12. For each day per week you use a form of medication to relax, subtract 5 points.

____ 13. For each day per week that you drink alcohol, subtract 5 points.

____ 14. For each day per week that you use alcohol to help you relax, subtract 10 points.

____ 15. For each day per week that you take work home, subtract 5 points (up to 35 points).

____ Total

Coping Index Scale

0–25 points	Heading for serious trouble. Stress illnesses and/or burnout may be already happening or are imminent.
25–55 points	Index is still problematic. Some illnesses are likely.
56 points or higher	A healthy stress index. Good reserves for managing stress.

Form can be downloaded at www.ceattc.org.

Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers[1]

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people's lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. This self-test helps you estimate your compassion status: how much at risk you are of burnout and compassion fatigue and also the degree of satisfaction with helping others. Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your current situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last week. Then follow the scoring directions at the end of the self-test.

0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often 5=Very Often

Items About You

____ 1. I am happy.

____ 2. I find my life satisfying.

____ 3. I have beliefs that sustain me.

____ 4. I feel estranged from others.

____ 5. I find that I learn new things from those I care for.

____ 6. I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.

____ 7. I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.

____ 8. I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.

____ 9. I feel connected to others.

____ 10. I feel calm.

____ 11. I believe that I have a good balance between my work and my free time.

____ 12. I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.

____ 13. I have outbursts of anger or irritability with little provocation

____ 14. I am the person I always wanted to be.

____ 15. I startle easily.

____ 16. While working with a victim, I thought about violence against the perpetrator.

____ 17. I am a sensitive person.

[1] *Adopted by B. Stamm and included in a chapter in C. R. Figley (Ed.) (in press), Treating Compassion Fatigue. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.*

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_____ 18. I have flashbacks connected to those I help.

_____ 19. I have good peer support when I need to work through a highly stressful experience.

_____ 20. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.

_____ 21. I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.

_____ 22. I think that I need to “work through” a traumatic experience in my life.

_____ 23. I think that I need more close friends.

_____ 24. I think that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.

_____ 25. I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.

_____ 26. Working with those I help brings me a great deal of satisfaction.

_____ 27. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.

_____ 28. I am frightened of things a person I helped has said or done to me.

_____ 29. I experience troubling dreams similar to those I help.

_____ 30. I have happy thoughts about those I help and how I could help them.

_____ 31. I have experienced intrusive thoughts of times with especially difficult people I helped.

_____ 32. I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a person I helped.

_____ 33. I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.

_____ 34. I am losing sleep over a person I help’s traumatic experiences.

_____ 35. I have joyful feelings about how I can help the victims I work with.

_____ 36. I think that I might have been “infected” by the traumatic stress of those I help.

_____ 37. I think that I might be positively “inoculated” by the traumatic stress of those I help.

_____ 38. I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of those I help.

_____ 39. I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.

_____ 40. I have a sense of hopelessness associated with working with those I help.

_____ 41. I have felt “on edge” about various things and I attribute this to working with certain people I help.

_____ 42. I wish that I could avoid working with some people I help.

_____ 43. Some people I help are particularly enjoyable to work with.

____ 44. I have been in danger working with people I help.

____ 45. I feel that some people I help dislike me personally.

0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often 5=Very Often

Items About Being a Helper and Your Helping Environment

____ 46. I like my work as a helper.

____ 47. I feel like I have the tools and resources that I need to do my work as a helper.

____ 48. I have felt weak, tired, run down as a result of my work as helper.

____ 49. I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.

____ 50. I have thoughts that I am a “success” as a helper.

____ 51. I am unsuccessful at separating helping from personal life.

____ 52. I enjoy my co-workers.

____ 53. I depend on my co-workers to help me when I need it.

____ 54. My co-workers can depend on me for help when they need it.

____ 55. I trust my co-workers.

____ 56. I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers

____ 57. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping technology.

____ 58. I feel I am working more for the money/prestige than for personal fulfillment.

____ 59. Although I have to do paperwork that I don’t like, I still have time to work with those I help.

____ 60. I find it difficult separating my personal life from my helper life.

____ 61. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.

____ 62. I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my role as a helper.

____ 63. I have thoughts that I am a “failure” as a helper.

____ 64. I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.

____ 65. I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work as a helper.

____ 66. I plan to be a helper for a long time.

Self-Test Scoring Instructions

Please note that research is ongoing on this scale and the following scores should be used as a guide, not confirmatory information.

1. Be certain you respond to all items.

2. Mark the items for scoring:
   a. Put an x by the following 26 items: 1-3, 5, 9-11, 14, 19, 26-27, 30, 35, 37, 43, 46-47, 50, 52-55, 57, 59, 61, 66.
   b. Put a check by the following 16 items: 17, 23-25, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 56, 58, 60, 62-65.
   c. Circle the following 23 items: 4, 6-8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20-22, 28, 29, 31-34, 36, 38-40, and 44.

3. Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items and note:

   Your potential for Compassion Satisfaction (x):
   118 and above = extremely high potential
   100-117 = high potential
   82-99 = good potential
   64-81 = modest potential
   below 63 = low potential

   Your risk for Burnout (check):
   32 or less = extremely low risk
   33-37= low risk
   34-50 = moderate risk
   51-75 = high risk
   76-85 = extremely high risk

   Your risk for Compassion Fatigue (circle):
   26 or less = extremely low risk
   27-30 = low risk
   31-35 = moderate risk
   36-40 = high risk
   41 or more = extremely high risk

Chart by circling the appropriate score categories below for your assessed level of risk.

Level of Risk	**Burnout Level**	**Compassion Fatigue (CF) Level**	**Satisfaction Level**
High/Extremely High	51 or more	36 or more	82 or more
Moderate	34 – 50	31 – 35	64 – 81
Extremely Low/Low	32 or less	30 or less	63 or less

Notes

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