Writing for Resilience

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Agenda

• Welcome
• Discuss compassion satisfaction
• Write, Reflect, Discuss
• Wrap Up
Focusing on Ourselves

• Self care is **not** self-indulgence. It is our responsibility.

• We can take an active role in promoting our own resilience and well-being.

• This can strengthen the impact of available workplace supports.
What is Compassion Satisfaction?

“Our work has the potential to really make a difference for children and their families.”

~Child Welfare Agency Manager

• A sense of fulfillment in your work, a quiet sense of satisfaction.
• The literature on burnout and compassion fatigue suggests self care and CS can help prevent burnout and promote resilience.

Research on Writing for Well-Being

• Compassion satisfaction helps prevent burnout and compassion fatigue.
• Increased resilience, optimism, self-esteem, positive mood, initiative, curiosity, strengthened relationships, improved health and longevity.
• Decreased neuroticism, depression, anxiety, loneliness, envy.

Lyubomirsky, 2007 & Neff, 2006
Writing Style

• Open up and really express your feelings and thoughts.
• Describe negative and positive feelings and experiences.
• Switch perspectives. For example shift from first to third person.
• Find your own voice - one that reflects who you are.
• Write by hand or type.
Safety Guidelines

• Keep your writing private.
• Discussions here will focus on the experience of writing, not the content.
Promoting Resilience: Compassion Satisfaction

Choose one of these:

• What drew you to the work you now do?
• Write honestly about the value and positive impact of what you bring to the work.
• Write about a time you did your absolute best with a client/participant.
• Write about what you are most thankful for at work.
• Write about something that happened at work that you find extremely funny.

While the whole notion of this [making one’s self-care a priority] might seem selfish or self-centered, doing so actually allows us to make our greatest contribution to the world.

Cheryl Richardson, The Art of Extreme Self-Care

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Promoting Resilience – Self Compassion

Write a letter to a valued friend or co-worker, or from yourself to yourself. Write as if they had the same significant experience you just described. Express your compassion and empathy. Share any perspective, wisdom or advice you now have. Tell this person what you have learned from the experience that has been useful. Honestly and openly share your deepest thoughts and feelings.
Small Group Discussion

1. What did you notice from this writing experience?
2. How will you incorporate Writing for Resilience as an ongoing self-care strategy?
“...this work is most rewarding: to see people transformed immediately from sadness, desperation and depression to hope, joy and a renewed sense of purpose and meaning...”

Charles Figley, *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*
References and Resources


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