Nurturing Resilience:

Sustenance Amid the Suffering

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"So where is the hope amid this much suffering? I believe it is in the nurturance of the individual within the sustenance of community."

—HUDNALL STAMM

Burnout is the natural response, not personal failing, of an overburdened, under-supported, under-resourced human working in oppressive systems.

Secondary traumatic stress are changes within the individual who is exposed to distressing, traumatic content in their work life.
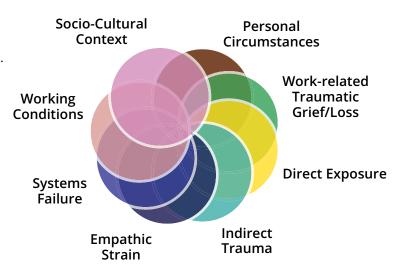
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Risk Factors for Work-Related Stress

Identifying where sources of stress and trauma are coming from is a helpful starting point. Scan the QR code below to get more detailed information about each area.

Each section includes one or two reflection questions that can guide your self-assessment.

Socio-Cultural Context

Personal Circumstances

Work-related Traumatic Grief/Loss

Working Conditions

Direct Exposure

Systems Failure

Indirect Trauma

Empathic Strain

TEND Academy, 2023

In this moment, are you:

- » Tired or exhausted
- » Hungry or thirsty
- » Preoccupied by a case(s)/family(ies)
- » Tense in part(s) of your body
- » Feeling hopeless or overwhelmed about your work

- » Skeptical about help you get at work
- » Frustrated by your tasks
- » Trying to avoid situations because they are too difficult
- » Feeling like a failure
- » Feel disconnected from friends, family

How often are any of these experiences affecting you at work? At home? In your relationships?

The more they are, the more prone you may be to burnout or secondary traumatic stress.

How severe do these experiences become on a scale of 0 (not at all bothersome) to 10 (very bothersome and disruptive)? Again, with increasing severity, you may be at a higher risk for burnout or secondary traumatic stress.

Scan the QR code to take the free Professional Quality of Life Scale. It can be repeated and used as a tool for reflection and ongoing monitoring of burnout, compassion satisfaction, and secondary traumatic stress.

Grounding Check in

Use this brief Grounding Check In to notice where your thoughts, body, and mood are in any given moment. Take that time to notice what qualities might help you as you move into the next moments.

» Name 1 or 2 things you are *Thinking* about.

» Name 1 or 2 things you sense in your *Body*.

» Name 1 or 2 words to describe your *Mood*.

» Name 1 or 2 *Qualities* that would help you right now:

- Peace
- Self-compassion
- Energy
- Wisdom
- Connectedness
- Courage / Bravery
- Calm

- Warmth
- Love
- Belonging
- Honesty
- Creativity
- Gratitude
- Patience

Gratitude

Research continues to demonstrate how an intentional gratitude practice can boost our wellbeing. We can also be intentional about how we use this to our benefit in our work particularly when we notice why we appreciate something.
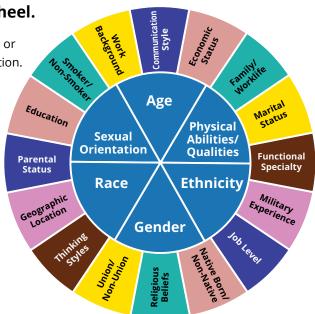
> » Which person or animal are you most grateful for right now?
> » What is a place you are grateful for?
> » What is something happening in your work that you feel grateful for?
> » What is something you have done that has made a positive difference for a child and family?
> » What resilience have you witnessed in a child or family that you appreciate?
> » Why are you grateful or appreciative for these things?

By intentionally calling some of these attributes to mind, we can nurture compassion satisfaction, or appreciating the positive impact we have in our work, and vicarious resilience, or our own sense of increased resilience as a direct result of witnessing the resilience in those we serve.

Locate aspects of your health, culture, and identity on this wheel.

Consider how various parts may carry more or less power, privilege, access, or marginalization.
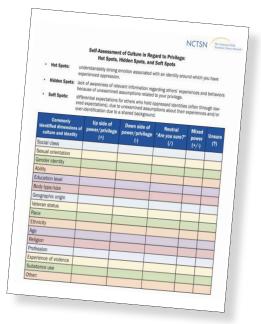
- » In what circumstances might an aspect of you be a source of resilience and/or advantage?

- » In what circumstances might an aspect of you be a source of strain?

- » Have you experienced harm as a result of an aspect of your identity, culture, or identity? If so, who are trusted people in your personal or professional life with whom you can safely process that experience?
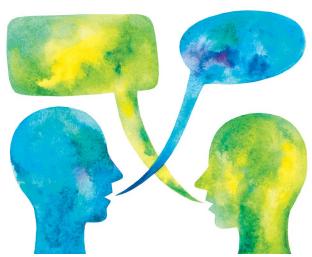
Power and Privilege

Do you know what kind of power and privilege you hold based on different aspects of how you are? Scan the QR code below to access the Self-Assessment of Culture in Regard to Privilege: Hot Spots, Hidden Spots, and Soft Spots. This tool can help you get more perspective where aspects of your culture and identity may contribute to various ways of showing up in numerous situations.

NCTSN & Cuellar, R., Hendricks, A., and Clarke, M., 2022

After completing the self-assessment, talk with a trusted colleague, friend, or your supervisor.

- » What stands out to you most after completing this self-assessment?

- » What interactions with clients, colleagues, or supervisors come to mind as you consider where you hold power, have experienced oppression, or have possible blind spots?

- » How do you feel impacted by others holding power? What about your colleagues? Now the children and families you serve?

- » How do you feel experiences of oppression might impact your work?

- » What are steps you can take to address blind spots? Who can support you in taking these steps? What will you ask them to do?

Culture of Care & Appreciation

Building a culture of care and appreciation contributes to our own wellbeing and connects us to others in positive ways.

- » **Identify** one act of kindness, courage, or advocacy you noticed a colleague did. Tell them the impact it had on you to witness that.

- » **Consider** a small step a family took towards a positive change that was important to them. Take a moment to reflect with them on what it took to make this change and offer them intentional praise or reinforcement for making this change. For example, a parent mentions they asked a friend to come give them a break when they noticed they were getting really worn out and cranky. They didn't want to get impatient with their small children. You ask them how they knew to do this and what it took for them to make that call. You offer them encouragement and genuine praise for this positive step.

- » **Notice** something you have done recently that brought you a sense of joy, compassion, or a sense of feeling fulfilled in your work. Write it down. If you like, tell someone about that experience and how it felt as you experienced it.

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