Don’t forget about you...

Self-care strategies
Today we will

• Talk about stress and compassion fatigue
  – What is it? Who is affected?
• Factors that help or hinder coping
• Review strategies to find balance and good self-care
People are disturbed not by things but by the view they take of them.

~ Epictetus
The Emotional Cost of Caring

• Caring for others is an emotional experience

• We can only cope with so much

• Risk Compassion Fatigue/Secondary Traumatic Stress/Vicarious Trauma/Burnout

• Find your balance/Know your limits
What are we talking about??

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Compassion Fatigue

Vicarious Trauma

Burnout
“One can give nothing whatever without giving oneself, that is to say risking oneself”

~ James Baldwin
Early Warning Signs

- Frequent colds
- Reduced sense of accomplishment
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Moodiness
- Interpersonal conflicts
Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

• Cognitive:
  – low concentration, apathy, rigidity, disorientation, minimization, preoccupation with trauma

• Emotional:
  – powerlessness, anxiety, guilt, anger, numbness, fear, helplessness, sadness, depression, feeling depleted, shock, blunted or enhanced affect
Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

• **Behavioural:**
  – Irritable, withdrawn, moody, poor sleep, nightmares, appetite change, hyper-vigilance, isolating

• **Spiritual:**
  – Questioning life’s meaning, pervasive hopelessness, loss of purpose, questioning religious beliefs, loss of faith, scepticism

• **Somatic:**
  – Sweating, racing heart, trouble breathing, dizziness, lowered immune system, headaches
Risk and Protective Factors impacting response to Workplace Stressors

- Organizational Culture and Management practices
- Individual personalities and health

- Workload/Work pace
- Role Conflict
- Conflicting task
- Effort/Reward imbalance
- Skill discretion
- Decision authority
- Perceived fairness
- Workplace social support
Strategies

Risk Reduction
Beating Stress/Compassion
Fatigue
Impact on Organization

“If several people in a work unit are highly short-tempered, argumentative and pessimistic, it is bound to negatively affect the people around them leading the entire work area or organization to function like a traumatized person.”

(Tullberg, Avinadav, & Chemtob, 2012)
Workplace Strategies

- Acknowledge CF/VT is an occupational hazard
- Educate/normalize
- Peer support programs
- Workplace wellness initiatives, support self-care for workers
- Balanced caseloads; diversify tasks
- LID: Low Impact Disclosure/Debriefing
Keep work positive

- Avoid the rumour mill
- Spend time with positive people
- Look for ways to help others at work
- Continue to learn
- Take your breaks, avoid multi-tasking (when possible)
Work with your manager/supervisor

• Ask for help with prioritizing tasks and managing work overload if overwhelmed
• Ask to give input on decisions about your work whenever possible
"I can’t work next to Phil anymore.
I’m tired of inhaling secondhand stress!"
Mental Health at Work

Some interesting (concerning) statistics from the literature:

- 1/3 of workers experience chronic stress
- 26% reported burn-out or stress at work
- CMHA (National) survey: 25% identify work as a major source of stress and anxiety
- Workers with chronic physical health issues are at increased risk for MH issues
Choosing our response

There is a space between stimulus (e.g. stressors, boredom, excitement, passion) and response. (e.g. anxiety, frustration, happiness, energy)

**STIMULUS** → Instinct/Impulse or Choice → **RESPONSE**
The choices we make

When unhealthy or stressed, our choices are limited, often to a “fight or flight” response.
Strategies for Wellness

It is O.K. To Take Care Of Yourself Too.
Stress Awareness

• How does STRESS get your attention?

“Your body will present its bill.”

~ Alice Miller
Self-Awareness is key

• Your personal triggers/stressors
• Your signs and symptoms
• Your behaviours and thoughts
• Your coping strategies
What the research tells us: Strategies that work

• Workplace:
  – Take breaks, lunch
  – Mutual peer support
  – Seek out new projects or interests
  – Regular supervision/consultation
  – Balance daily workload
  – Transition between work and home
Strategies that Work

• Emotional:
  – Laughing/crying
  – Affirmations
  – Spending time with people you care about
  – Seek out pleasurable activities
  – Get involved in something you are passionate about
Strategies that Work

• Psychological:
  – Self-monitoring
  – Focus on positive aspects of work
  – Journal
  – Talk with trusted friend/collleague or therapist – yes – therapist!
  – Decrease personal stressors
Strategies that Work

• Physical:
  – Diet
  – Sleep
  – Exercise
  – Health care
  – VACATIONS
Strategies that Work

• Spiritual:

  – Time in nature
  – Find a spiritual connection or community
  – Read something inspirational
  – Contribute to social causes of personal importance
What do you do for Self-care?

• Ideas for you, Ideas for the workplace
Relax & Let Go

• Relaxation techniques
  – Breathing
  – Progressive relaxation

• Positive Psychology
  – Gratitude
  – Mindfulness
  – Radical Acceptance
Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself, and know that everything in life has purpose. There are no mistakes, no coincidences, all events are blessings given to us to learn from.

~ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day - unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour.

~ Old Zen adage ~
Look for humour!!!

- Laugh your way to fitness
- Laughter is the best medicine
- Ah! To be a child again…
Him? No, he doesn't want a cookie. He says I can have two.
Mental Health is multi-faceted

• Capacity
• Resilience
• Sense of control
• Achieving and Maintaining Balance
Respect your limits

Seek and ask for help!
Make a commitment to yourself

• Look at your Stress Index score
• Be aware of the stressors in your life
• What changes can you make?
• What will you do for your self-care?
“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Winston Churchill
Live like someone left the gate open!
More information is available at:

- CMHA-WECB: 255-7440  
  [http://www.windsforessex.cmha.ca](http://www.windsforessex.cmha.ca)

- Mental Health Works:  
  [http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/)

- Working Through It:  
  [http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti)

- Guarding Minds at Work:  
  [http://guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://guardingmindsatwork.ca)

- Workplace Mental Health Promotion –how to guide:  
  [http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/](http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/)
Sources: (in addition to CMHA)


Minnesota School of Social Work

Thank you!
Please complete evaluation

Canadian Mental Health Association
Windsor-Essex County
Empowering transitions to wellness.