



Building Professional Excellence- Part 7

Session 1: Revive, Refresh, Renew: Personal Resilience to Reinvigorate Your Practice

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Lynell Howard.

Question from Barbara Diane Coffey

What are some suggestions for reviving and renewing our original passion for counseling that was not covered in the personal plan?

Answer from Presenter

This question means different things to different people, but the best place to begin is with assessing individual needs of the clinician. Burnout has many different sources, so identifying the source of burnout (excess stress, long hours, lack of work-life balance, loss of meaning in work, etc.) provides the starting point for intervention. If the challenges the clinician (or any other individual faces) is related to no longer finding meaning in work, then it may be helpful for that individual to do a quick assessment of the reasons they were initially called to do this work. From there, exploring aspects of the work that are still meaningful and limiting their practice to those areas may help the clinician to reconnect and find a sense of purpose. Additionally, participating in education and training in topics of interest may spark a reconnection. But there is no one size fits all approach for reigniting the original passion for the work that we do.

Question from Lanetta Harper

What are some ways that we can start a self-care initiative on the job? especially when downtime is limited.

Answer from Presenter

Developing a work-place self-care initiative will typically involve the support of managers and administrators, especially if it involves taking time away from the work day. However, there are small ways that self-care, whether individual or group efforts, can be incorporated into the work place or work day. You can begin by creating an atmosphere that is soothing to the senses. What are the scents or smells in the office? Aroma therapy can be relaxing, de-stressing, and calming to both clinicians and clients, so this is a small way to engage in self-care. Focus now on the sense of sound and think about the background noises that are in the work place? Are the sounds soothing and if not, how can you adjust the sounds or create sounds that are soothing? In my office I have a white noise machine that plays over 20 sounds, with soft meditation sounds being one of them. So think about how you can change the type of noise in the work place. Also, what are the things you see, is the lighting too harsh, are there pleasing pictures or objects on the walls? Is there a place to take breaks that is soothing, re-energizing, and relaxing? These are small things to start with, but you can certainly create an environment that is conducive to self-care and move along to promoting activities that contribute to self-care but that also doesn't interfere with the business of business. A dress down or casual day is one such activity. Good luck and happy promoting.



Question from Allen Vosburg Seymour

We speak about ourselves which is so important, so how do we help our clients not to experience some kind of burnout of their own? What is our main focus?

Answer from Presenter

We can assist our clients with avoiding burnout in much the same way as we can help ourselves and our co-workers or supervisees. One thing that resonates with clients and that applies to us all is establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries. When we are able to apply controls to the things that we allow in our space, mentally, physically, spiritually, etc. it serves to preserve our coping resources so that we are able to dedicate them as we see fit. Understanding that we have the right to establish and maintain healthy boundaries goes a long way in reducing or avoiding burn out.

In my practice with clients, I often utilize the same self-care assessment that I mentioned as being available on the therapist aid website. In doing so we make the connection between caring for themselves, creating safe and nurturing space, and managing stressors. Burnout can be a result of many chronic stressors in life, so incorporating in our sessions the simple question of “what did you do to take care of yourself this past week?” serves as the reminder that it is ok to take time away for self-care and it is encouraged as a part of total well-being. As you are aware, individual needs will vary, so it is up to the therapist and the individual to make the determination of what is the best approach for the individual client to encourage and incorporate self-care strategies in their routine to break away from ongoing stressors.

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