

# Self-Care: to Invigorate and Sustain You in Your Work

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# Quotes:

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

“Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

# Challenges in Representing UACs

- \* Traumatic stories
- \* Fractured families, conflict
- \* Lack of social services
- \* Economic difficulties
- \* Alcohol/Drug problems
- \* Homelessness
- \* Challenging legal arguments
- \* Some judges hostile to UAC claims

# Vicarious Trauma or Compassion Fatigue

- \* Clients share stories of trauma, may be first time share experience with another person
- \* Lawyers engage in compassionate listening – be present to hear, witness and desire to help
- \* Vicarious trauma is when the helper is negatively impacted by the exposure to the traumatic experiences of the client
- \* May result in frustration, irritability, disconnect, anger, helplessness, pessimism or cynicism, sickness, flashbacks, nightmares, sleeplessness, sadness, interpersonal conflict

# Vicarious Trauma, con't

- \* What to do about it?
  - \* Awareness: recognize it exists and it affects you
  - \* Communicate: talk about it to others including co-workers who understand
  - \* Act: engage in self-care

# What Constitutes Self-Care?

- \* Exercise
- \* Hobbies: cooking, reading, photography, art, movies
- \* Take Vacation/Travel
- \* Meditation
- \* Time with friends, family, relationships
- \* Adequate Sleep
- \* Proper Nutrition
- \* Medical care – doctor's visits, counseling

# Why is Self-Care Important?

- \* Energy
- \* Motivation
- \* Health
- \* Happiness
- \* Community
- \* Relief
- \* Improved cognitive abilities
- \* Longevity in the profession

# Create work environment to encourage self-care

- \* Management must be supportive
- \* Management must demonstrate self-care
- \* Create “Fun” committee
- \* Take time to celebrate successes and milestones
- \* Take time to debrief losses
- \* Recognize “burn-out” in others and offer support
- \* Seek out help when feeling overwhelmed
- \* Ask others how they maintain motivation and compassion

# Helpful Ways to Think about your Work:

- \* Avoid the Martyr syndrome - putting everyone else's needs above your own so that you can give your life meaning
- \* You are not responsible for all of the injustices in the world, not even all the injustices in your community
- \* Focus on helping individuals and take satisfaction in the positive outcomes and dignity you add to the process
- \* Avoid trying to be anyone's savior
- \* Consider your role as intentional, dedicated accompaniment with a specific desired outcome for a limited duration
- \* Do not sacrifice your own life for the sake of others

# Quote:

The most powerful relationship you will ever have is the relationship with yourself.

- Steve Maraboli

# Despite a Dedication to Self-Care, you Will Still Confront:

- \* Demanding work
- \* Working some nights and weekends
- \* Emotional Stress
- \* Worry
- \* Defeat
- \* Sadness
- \* Overwhelm
- \* Injustices you cannot resolve

# When You Need a Break

- \* Take a sabbatical/leave of absence
- \* Work in another field or position for a time
- \* Take on fewer cases
- \* Diversify your job
- \* Seek out mentors to advise and support you

# Quote:

“When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life.”

- Jean Shinoda Bolen