

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

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## Quote:

“In dealing with those who are undergoing great suffering, if you feel burnout setting in, if you feel demoralized and exhausted, it is best, for the sake of everyone, to withdraw and restore yourself. The point is to have a long-term perspective.”

- Dalai Lama



# Reflection on Professional Path

- What do you think has brought you to do this work?
- Why does it matter to consider this question?



# Challenges in Representing UACs

- What are the Major Challenges in Representing UACs?
- How Do These Challenges Make You Feel?
- What Helps You Deal with These Challenges?
- Who Helps You Deal with These Challenges?



# Common Responses to Service Work

- Compassion Fatigue
  - The gradual erosion of an ability to empathize with difficult stories, a desensitization or numbing toward the clients' stories, feeling slightly bored or uninterested
- Secondary or Vicarious Trauma
  - Repeated exposure to stories we hear are internalized and can turn into post traumatic stress disorder causing nightmares, heightened awareness, anxiety, fear
- Moral Distress
  - A frustration with systemic failures and inability to adequately address injustice
- Burnout
  - Deterioration of ability to sustain work duties may be related to low pay or lack of adequate training or supervision.
- How Do these conditions Manifest in Your Emotional/Physical Being?
- How Do You Respond?



# Fatigue/Trauma/Burnout, 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?

- Please list activities that constitute self-care for you.
- How do these activities affect fatigue/trauma/burnout?
- How do you feel when you engage in these activities?



# Why is Self-Care Important?

- Enumerate five reasons why self-care is important.
- Describe how you feel when you fail to engage in self-care.
- Describe how you feel when you make time for self-care.

# Create work environment to encourage self-care

- Does your employer encourage self-care?
- If so, how?
- If not, what can you do about it?
- Outside of the work environment, do you have a support network?

# Helpful Ways to Think about your Work:

- Recognize the value of a limited, honest and respectful interaction even if you cannot help the individual
- Resist feeling responsible to change the entire system overnight. Focus on the process of helping individuals and take satisfaction in the positive outcomes and the dignity you add to the negative outcomes
- Avoid trying to be anyone's savior – you play a limited role in your clients' lives, recognize this fact
- Consider your role as intentional, dedicated and specialized accompaniment in a particular time and place
- Do not sacrifice your own life for the sake of others, it can lead to unhappiness and resentment
- The service you provide to others will be paid forward in ways you cannot imagine



# 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 Challenges:

- Name some of the challenges you will face in your work over the next year.
- Do you find yourself:
  - Always operating in crisis mode
  - Saying “yes” to everything or finding it hard to say “no”
  - Worried that if you don’t show enough dedication or passion, you will be judged



# When You Need a Break

- What can you do when you need a break from direct service work?
- What alternatives exist in the immigration field?
- What other fields might you want to work in that are similarly rewarding?



## Quote:

“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