

# Self-Care for Those Who Care for Others

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# Core Principle of Positive Youth Development

Youth watch adult behaviors closely and how we model adaptive strategies to stress matters.

# UNLESS



We cannot **and must not** fall back on the defense mechanisms that allow others to ignore the realities we bear witness to every day

**There is no “other”**

**There is only US**

If we are to be this open to reality,  
without falling back on toxic defense  
mechanisms . . .

We must have strategies and supports  
that allow us to remain whole while  
serving youth in a loving way

# Something We Who Serve Others Rarely Speak About

Us

**How do we define success?**



To touch many lives over a  
lifetime of service and  
connection with others

# Burnout Prevention

**Stress** is usually something people are acutely aware of, whereas burnout can present insidiously.

When you are **stressed**, you care too much, but when you are burned out, you don't see any hope of improvement. You are numb.

The Worst thing is not to be  
stressed . . . it is to be **NUMB**

# Stress

Characterized by over engagement

Emotions are overreactive

Produces urgency and hyperactivity

Loss of energy

# Stress

Leads to anxiety disorders

Primary damage is physical

May kill you prematurely

**Activated, sometimes paralyzed**

# Burnout

Characterized by disengagement

Emotions are blunted

Produces helplessness and  
hopelessness

Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope

# Burnout

Leads to detachment and Depression

Primary damage is emotional

May make life seem not worth living

**Depleted**



# Workplace Factors that lead to burnout:

- **Cultures that normalize extending oneself beyond physical, or emotional capacities.**
- **Cultures that confuse over-functioning with ambitiousness and blur the boundary between professional and personal lives.**
- **Coercive or punitive rules**
- **Work that causes you to violate your personal values**

# Individual Factors that lead to burnout:

- **Individuals who have unmet personal needs or have conflicting needs**
- **Individuals whose self definition is too tightly tied to work**
- **Setting unrealistic goals for yourself or having them imposed on you**
- **Being expected to be too many things to too many people**

# The Universal Factor that may lead to our burnout:

**Those who spend their work lives attending to the needs of others, especially if their work puts them in frequent contact with the dark or tragic side of human experience.**

# What does burnout do to our relationships and work environment?

May make us less likely to engage

May send a message to eager coworkers that they are over-functioning, setting an overall lower standard as part of the “welcoming” or orientation process

May make more energetic coworkers **misjudge** seasoned colleagues as unfeeling or uncaring, when, in fact, the problem is that they have cared too much

Serving Over a Lifetime

# **The “Solution” on One Slide**

**(The premise is ridiculous)**

- 1. Boundaries**
- 2. Knowing (and experiencing) that what we do matters**
- 3. Self-Care**

# Boundaries

Not the easy stuff. How do you love and still remain whole?

- Knowing our buttons
- Being trauma-informed
- Knowing who is the expert
- Avoiding the rescue fantasy
- Giving control back
- How much do we share?
- How much do we give to each youth?
- I or We?

# Work Versus Home Relationships



# Knowing Our Buttons

# Finding your buttons



# Being Trauma Informed

# Three Key Principles of Trauma Informed Practices

- Knowing what is about you and what is not about you
- Changing your lens from “What’s wrong with you!” to “What happened to you?”
- Giving control back to people from whom control has been taken away

*To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. (BGCA)*

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- Youth who need us the most are often those who push us away
- Youth who need us the most are often those who push our buttons
- Youth who need us the most, raise uncomfortable feelings in us
- Youth who need us the most withhold rewards from us.

# Knowing Who is the Expert



Avoiding the Rescue Fantasy

Giving Control Back

How Much Do We Share?

How Much Do We Give to Each Youth?



I or We?

**Knowing (and experiencing) that  
what we do matters**

**Self Care: The Greatest Gift You Can  
Give Those You Serve**

The importance of  
**Connection** can not be  
overstated. . .

- Family
- Spirituality
- Community
- **Mission**

# Writing a personal mission statement

The Worst thing is not to be  
stressed . . . it is to be **NUMB**







