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HEALTHY WORKPLACES: what does it look like and how to get one

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What is a Healthy Workplace?

What do you think are
elements that make up
a healthy workplace?



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Common Themes

- Good atmosphere
- Supportive (co-workers and administration)
- Flexible



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What is Burnout?

How do you recognize burnout? In yourself? In co-workers? In others you come across?



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Burnout Defined

Burnout is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It can occur when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical, and resentful. The unhappiness burnout causes can eventually threaten your job, your relationships, and your health.

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/burnout_signs_symptoms.htm#what



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Signs of Burn Out

- Depleted energy
- Feeling trapped
- Hopelessness
- Irritable
- Passion gone for the work
- No patience for clients
- Feels taken advantage of
- Cynicism (people act out of selfishness and nothing can be done about it)



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Secondary Traumatization

Secondary trauma is defined as indirect exposure to trauma through a firsthand account or narrative of a traumatic event.

<http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=175802430>



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What can be done?

Think of ways you cope with stress, avoid burn out, feel renewed.



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Ideas That are Easy To Implement

- Support group
- Yoga
- Coaching
- Flex Time/Use Vacation & Sick Time/REALLY ONLY WORK 8 hours/day
- Learning how to/encouraging saying "no"
- Strategic Planning so have justification for no
- Buddies, encourage staff to turn to each other
- Breathing



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Other Ideas

- Staff Retreat
- System of showing appreciation
- Financial planning services
- Counseling
- Good management:
 - Tools to do the job
 - No micromanaging



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Strategies to Avoid Secondary Traumatization

- 1) professional strategies, such as balancing caseloads and accessible supervision;
- 2) organizational strategies, such as sufficient release time and safe physical space;
- 3) personal strategies, such as respecting one's own limits and maintaining time for self-care activities and
- 4) general coping strategies, such as self-nurturing and seeking connection.

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Why Worry?

Why do we care about burnout and secondary traumatization? What are the "costs"?



Cost of Burnout

- Staff is in agony
- Staff turnover
 - Loss of institutional knowledge
 - Cost of hiring and training
 - Cost to productivity, client work
- Increased sick leave
- Possible Liability if work suffering
 - Reputation of organization may suffer
 - Who is going to pick up slack?
- Loosing good people/exodus from "doing good"



"Cost" of a Healthy Workplace

- Support group (\$1,200/year)
- Yoga classes (free)
- Coaching (pro bono)
- Flex time (15 minutes for every hour not flexed within pay period - \$0)
- Buddy system, subsidizing lunches (\$2,400/year)
- Breathing (priceless)



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Calling for a Culture Change

Change from a culture of “grinding through staff” and on of scarcity to one that values people!

Realize that we must model in how we treat each other, how we hope our clients will be treated!

Clients will suffer if do not (staff will talk disparagingly about clients, cannot be empathetic or responsive, will make assumptions about what clients will do)