

Healing From the Covid-19 Pandemic



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Trauma... You, Me, Us

“The occupational stress of helping professionals serving traumatized populations is a significant workforce issue for human service organizations.”

- Jennifer Middleton, PhD, LCSW

Objectives

1. Recognize change and loss over the last year.
2. Identify emotions and learn about how to individually process through emotions.
3. Learn about Toxic Stress and the mitigating impact of relationships.
4. Recommendations for institutional changes to foster resiliency.

STRESS, TRAUMA AND BURNOUT

Secondary Trauma

Trauma resulting from caring for, hearing about or witnessing the intense suffering of others. Over time, the cumulative effect can result in an internalization of trauma, leading to compassion fatigue or burnout.



Burnout

A special type of work-related stress — a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

Compassion Fatigue

Emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others, often described as the negative cost of caring. It is sometimes referred to as secondary traumatic stress.

Direct Trauma

Exposure to death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence.

Resiliency

A person's ability to endure stressful situations without suffering the physiological or psychological consequences. It is a learnable process of positive adaptation to acute and chronic stress.

Who's most at risk?

- Younger workers
- Workers with less field experience
- People with high empathy
- Helping professionals who experienced childhood trauma

Picture needs
changing

RESPONDER STRESS CONTINUUM



ADAPTED FROM COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS FIRST AID BY LAURA MCGLADREY | RESPONDERALLIANCE.COM

Taking Inventory...

- Where have you been on the continuum over the last year?
- Where are you today?

PROCESSING EMOTIONS





“

A lot of us are taught to believe that if we fix the problem that caused the stress or the emotion, then we have dealt with the emotion. But there is a disconnect in the world we live in now and the behaviors that deal with the things in our lives.

”

Amelia and Emily Nagoski talking about their book, *Healing from Burnout* in Brene Brown's Podcast *Unlocking Us* on October 14, 2020.



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The Challenge With COVID...

“Most disasters are fast, and big. You can see everyone else’s life got overturned when yours did. Houses are smashed, livestock’s dead. But plagues isolate people. They shut themselves inside while disease takes a life at a time, day after day. It adds up. Whole cities break under the load of what was lost. People stop trusting each other, because you don’t know who’s sick.”

-Tamora Pierce, Briar’s Book



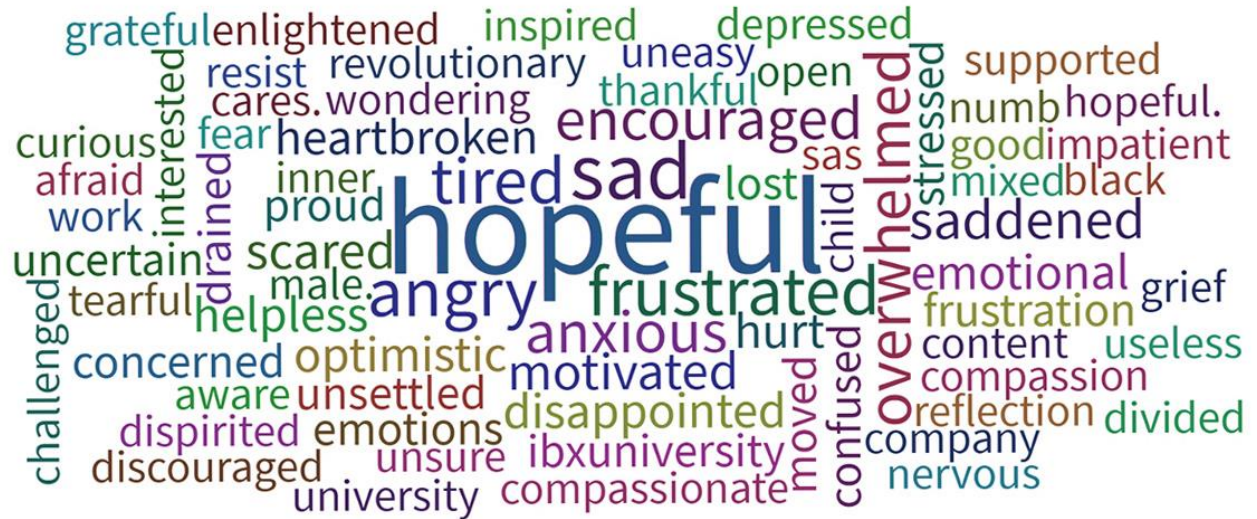
Identifying Loss & Stress

Sources of Loss and Stress

- Loss of connection
- Loss of practical and emotional support
- Loss of income
- Death of a loved one
- Health issues
- Increased caregiving
- Increased conflict with others
- Work stress & job dissatisfaction
- Death of a client
- Moral Injury

What emotions have you experienced during this time?

Which emotions have the most difficult to process?



Processing Through our Emotions

1. Physical Activity- Movement
2. Breathing
3. Positive Social Interaction
4. Deep laughter
5. The 20 second hug (leaning in, not on)
6. A Big Cry
7. Creative Expression (getting what is inside out)

Handout



Planning ahead...



What has worked for you?

4 Recommendations

Mental health matters.
People matter. YOU
matter. I can't fight my
battle alone, and you don't
have to either. Reach out!

~unknown

- Create space for healing
- Turn with compassion towards your emotions
- Seek support
- Look for the gift that comes out of processing through loss



Resources

- Available after trainings to talk
- Handouts
- EAP Counseling (cards available)
- Requesting other trainings

Brene with Emily And Amelia Nagoski on Burnout and How to Complete the Stress Cycle from Unlocking Us With Brene Brown Podcast. OCT 14, 2020.

www.mnfirstwellness.com/week-3-resilience-coping

Whatsyourgrief.com



“

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.

”

-Eleanor Roosevelt

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Healing the Healers: Employee Wellness Initiatives during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Effective Repair & Healing

- Brain-based, bottom-up approach using the 3 R's
- Start by taking care of physical and biological needs
 - Getting enough sleep (regulate system)
 - Staying hydrated and having a balanced diet (regulate system)
 - Regular exercise (regulate heart rate)
 - Mindfulness practices (regulate breath)
- Next, connect with your support system
 - Research has shown that the most important buffer to toxic stress are a safe and nurturing relationship
- Once you've regulated and connected, you will have better access to the part of our brain responsible for processing and integrating repair

(Dr. Bruce Perry)





Relational Building = Resilience Building

- Sharing food
- Ceremony
- Storytelling
- Talking Circles
- Regular gatherings
- Employee gym
- Collective rallying around prevention efforts (i.e. Cancer Awareness, Suicide Awareness, etc...)

Employee Wellness Activities

- Began implementing employee wellness services in July 2020 including:
 - Wellness Wednesday emails
 - Bi-weekly wellness circles focused on discussion and mindful practices
 - Monthly therapeutic processing group
 - Reminders about how to access employee assistance programs
- Since implementing employee wellness services, behavioral health has also seen an increase in employees seeking mental health services



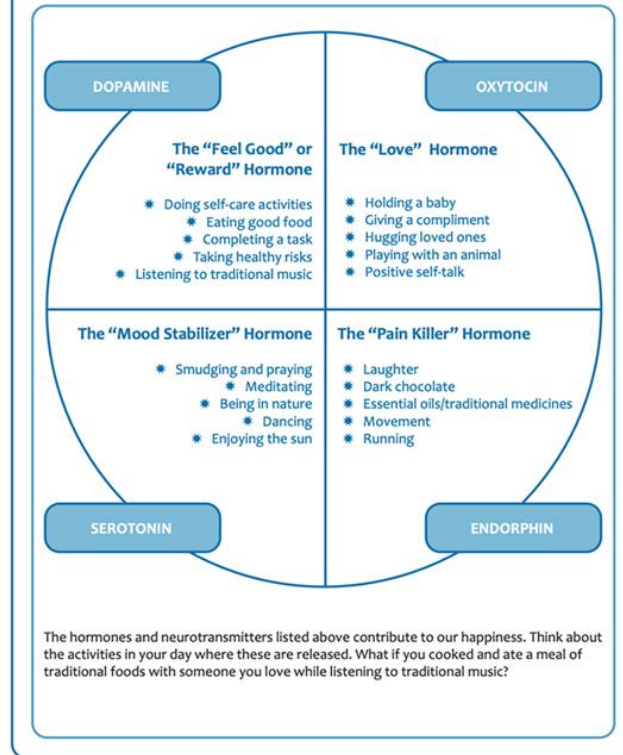
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Wellness Wednesday

- Psychoeducational materials in varying formats
 - Read, watch, engage
- Wellness Topics Include
 - Cultural wellness
 - Parenting & children's mental health
 - Healthy relationships & boundaries
 - Burnout and compassion fatigue
 - Moving through grief
 - Imposter syndrome
 - Stress reduction techniques
 - Coping with social injustice

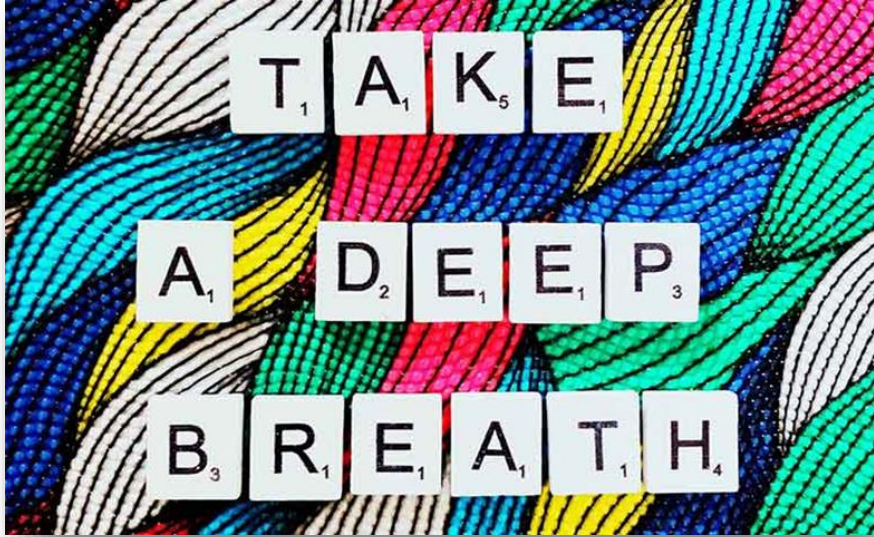


ENGAGE YOUR HAPPINESS CHEMICALS



Native Wellness Institute

Mindfulness Based Circles



- Pranayama (breath work)
- Emotional Freedom Tapping
- Chair yoga
- Containment (holding exercise)
- Meditation
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Talking Circles

- Self-care during the pandemic
- Social justice and political unrest
- Gratitude and resilience
- Cultural identity
- Journaling and processing emotions
- Developing boundaries in the workplace



Therapeutic Processing Group

A promotional poster for the Employee Healing Circle. At the top, it says "JOIN US!" and "EMPLOYEE HEALING CIRCLE" in large, bold, white letters on a dark background. Below this is a photograph of several metal containers filled with various art supplies like pens, pencils, and scissors. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo for Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center, Inc. To the right of the logo, a white banner with black text reads "LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH". Below the banner, the text describes the group's purpose and provides contact information.

JOIN US!
EMPLOYEE HEALING CIRCLE



**LAST FRIDAY
OF THE MONTH**

12pm-2pm in the Community Room

The Employee Healing Circle for GLIHC Employees, is a support group to offer a space of healing and connection through art-based activities. This will be a comfortable atmosphere where you can work and share at your own pace. In this group, you will build self-awareness, relational support, and empowerment. Join us on the last Friday of each month (dates: 4/30, 5/28, 6/25, 7/30, 8/27, & 9/24) from 12pm-2pm.

Contact Alaina (ext. 5049) or Tanya (ext. 5044) to register!

- Seven employees enrolled in group
 - Facilitated by licensed counselors
 - Group offered after-hours and provided lunch
 - Trauma-focused and tailored to provide safety
- Goals include:
 - Building awareness through artistic expression
 - Discharging stress responses
 - Building self-advocacy and communication skills
 - Improving self- and co-regulation skills
 - Developing relational health through social interaction and group experiences

Leadership and Administrative Support

- Check in regularly with staff members
- During busy times, consider providing a meal for staff
- Offer employees ways to feel connected with each other
- Flexibility around implementation of wellness supports
- Ensure policies are flexible enough to offer support to employees managing mental health concerns
- Encourage and honor the use of time off
- Roll over time off that was unused during busy periods
- Understand that many employees have direct connection(s) to the community being served

Resources & Contact

- [Cumulative Stress Self-Care PDF](#)
- Email: tscheidegger@gliihc.net



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