

A Christian Perspective on Self Care for the Social Worker

Lanny Endicott

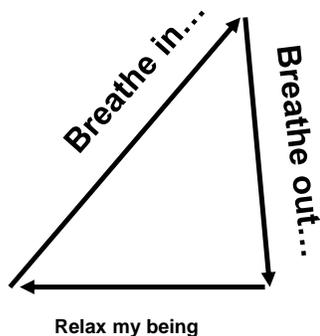
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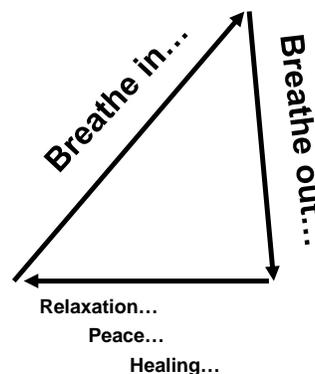
Suggestions for Training

- Begin with relaxation & breathing
- Conduct self assessments (ProQOL5)
- Emphasize Self-Care & Ethics of Impairment
- Define: Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Traumatic Stress, Burnout & Stress
- Relate spiritual compassion
- Recall suggestions for self-care
- Create/recommit to self-care plan
- Explore committing to agency self-care
- Present resources

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The Spirit of God God's "Breath"

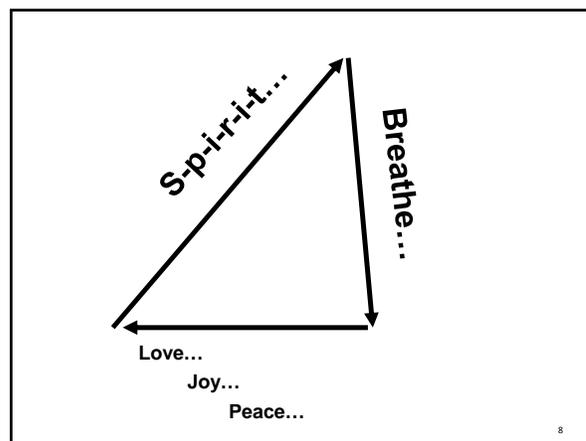
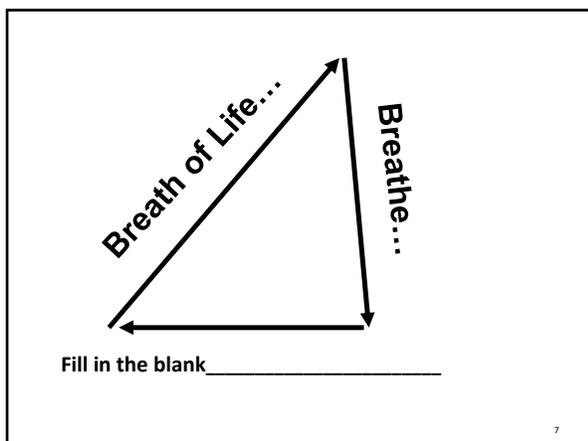
Ruwach.....Pneuma

- Moved over the water's surface (Genesis 1:2)
- Breathed life into man (Genesis 2:7)
- Parted the sea (Exodus 14:21)
- Breathed into dry bones (Ezekiel 37:10)
- Birthed Jesus in a virgin (Luke 1:34-35)
- Led Jesus (Matthew 4:1)

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- Brings forth the new birth (John 3:5-6)
- Jesus breathed the Spirit on the disciples (John 20:22)
- Indwells the believer (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19)
- Provides fruit for living (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Source of life for the believer (Galatians 5:25)
- Is a gift given to believers (Acts 2:38)

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**Professional Self-Care:
Social Work**

Professional self-care is an essential underpinning to best practice in the profession of social work. The need for professional self-care has relevance to all social workers in the settings where they practice.

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The practice of self-care is critical to the survival of and growth of the social work profession...health and productivity of the social worker

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NASW Code: 4.05 Impairment

a. Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress...interfere with their professional judgment and performance or jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility

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b. Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress... should take remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others

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Hurting people can be hurtful to others!

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Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping
 - Pleasure and satisfaction from working in helping, care giving systems
- May be related to
 - Providing care
 - The system itself
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
 - Altruism
 - Spiritual fulfillment (“sense of calling”)

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Compassion Fatigue

- The negative aspects of helping
- The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to
 - Providing care
 - The system itself
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self (dreams, values, matching)
- Burnout (spiritually: “a loss of self”)
- Work-related trauma

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Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress Defined

- Burnout
 - Work-related hopelessness and feelings of ineffectiveness
- Secondary Traumatic Stress
 - Work-related secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events
- Both have negative affects
 - Burnout is being worn out
 - STS can be related to fear (retreat, avoidance, anxiety)

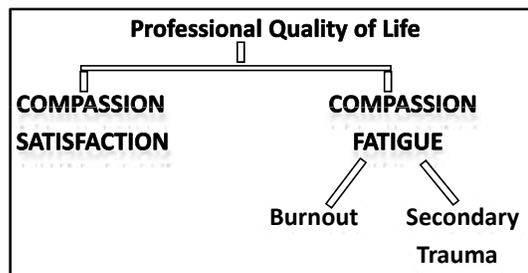
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Psychological Trauma Defined

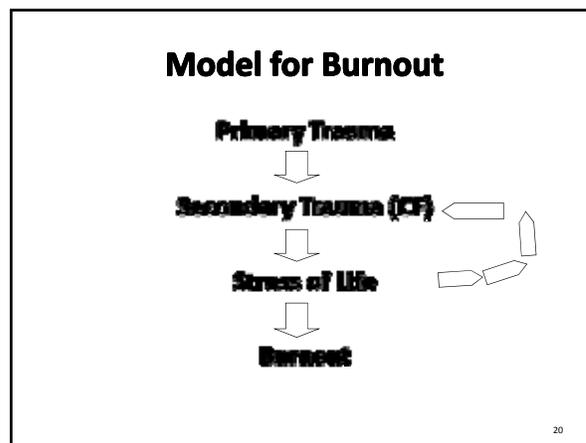
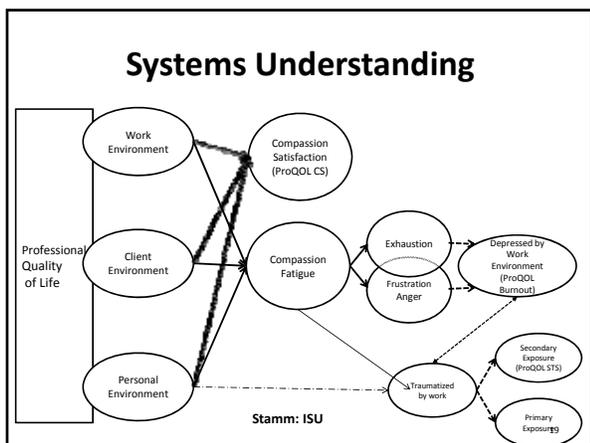
- Damage to the psyche from a traumatic event
- Can lead to PTSD
- Physical changes in the brain and to brain chemistry
- Changes the person's response to future stress

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Professional Quality of Life Beth Hudnall Stamm, Idaho State University



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Burnout

A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do “people-work” of some kind. (Maslach)

Exhaustion

“A state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.”
(Ayala Pines & Elliott Aronson)

Disillusionment

“A state of fatigue or frustration (or disillusionment) brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.”
(Freudenberger)

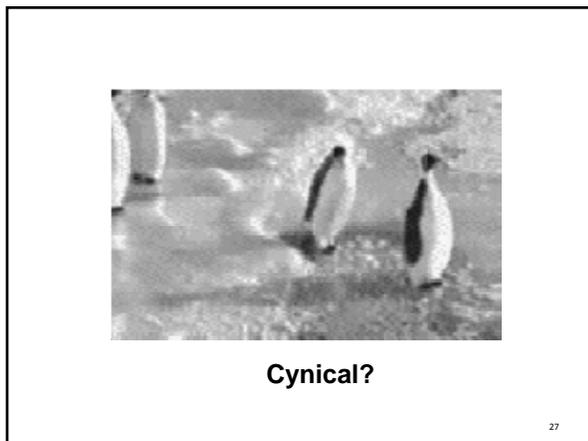
- ## Symptoms
- Fatigue
 - Frequent illness
 - Sleep problems
 - Disillusionment with work
 - Cynicism toward agency or clientele
 - Sense of helplessness/hopelessness
 - Feeling powerless to change events
 - Anger toward the “system” and/or “clients”

- Depression and isolation
- Detachment from co-workers
- Absenteeism
- Harshness in dealing with colleagues
- Reduced commitment to work
- Consumption of chemicals

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- ### ADDITIONAL FACTORS
- Long hours
 - Time constraints & deadlines
 - Excessive caseloads or clientele
 - Limited or inadequate resources
 - Being on call for crises and emergencies
 - Low pay
 - Lack of recognition and support

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Cynical?

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Oftentimes culprit:

organizational structure

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A Mismatch

Burnout is often a problem of the social environment in the workplace caused by "major mismatches" between the *nature of the person* doing a job and the *nature of the job* itself. The greater the mismatch, the greater the potential for burnout
(Maslach & Leiter)

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- ### Self-Care Policies
- The social agency/organization sets the agenda for self-care
 - Too few agencies have policies for staff self-care
 - Why???

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Some Answers to Why

- Financial pressures
- Do more with less mentality
- Blame the worker
- Lack of staff-care philosophy, policy, planning efforts

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Burnout: A Gradual Process

- Unaware of burnout happening
- Increased effort – accomplishing less
- Exhausted, disillusioned, and isolated
- Organizational effects:
 - Low morale
 - Absenteeism
 - High turnover

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Secondary Traumatic Stress

A risk the professional incurs when engaging empathically with an adult or child who has been traumatized

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A Definition

A state of tension and preoccupation with the individual or cumulative trauma of clients :

- **Re-experiencing** one's traumatic event(s)
- **Avoidance/numbing** of reminders related to one's traumatic event
- **Persistent arousal**
- Combined with the added effects of **cumulative stress** (can lead to burnout)

(Charles Figley)

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Natural Consequence

A natural consequence & by-product of caring for, listening to, and helping those traumatized

&

Learning about, hearing stories of those traumatized

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Three Categories of Symptoms

1. **Intrusive** thoughts, images, sensations
2. **Avoidance** of people, places, things and experiences which elicit memories of the traumatic experience
3. **Negative arousal** in terms of hyper-vigilance, sleep disturbances, irritability and anxiety

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More About Symptoms

Emotional Indicators

Anger
Sadness
Prolonged grief
Anxiety
Depression

Physical Indicators

Headaches
Stomach aches
Lethargy
Sleep problems

Personal Indicators

Self-isolation
Cynicism
Mood swings
Irritability with spouse/family

Work Indicators

Avoids certain clients
Missed appointments
Tardiness
Lack of motivation

(Bruce Perry)

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Vicarious Trauma

The traumatic impact on those who feel the intensity of the traumatic event through another person

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A Key risk: Working with Traumatized Children

- Empathy
- Insufficient recovery time
- Unresolved personal trauma
- Most vulnerable--work with children
- Isolation and fragmentation at the workplace (lacking effective team to work with)
- Lack of resources

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Spiritual Compassion

- **Having pity** (Exodus 2:6)
- **Having love and mercy** (Psalm 103:13)
- **Being torn of heart** (James 5:11; Colossians 3:12)
- **Having deep feelings** (Matthew 18:34; 20:24)

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Fatigue

- **Losing heart** (2 Corinthians 4:1; Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13)
- **Becoming faint and weary** (Galatians 6:9)

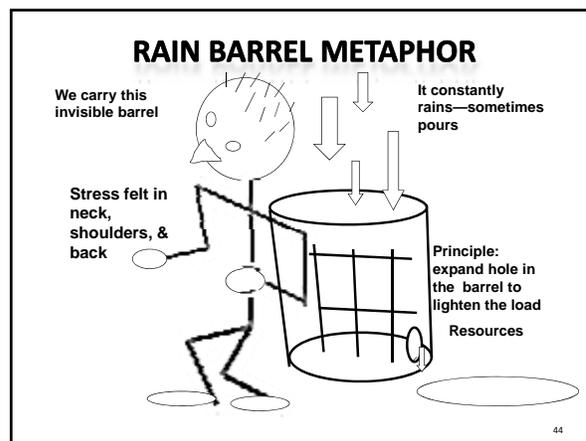
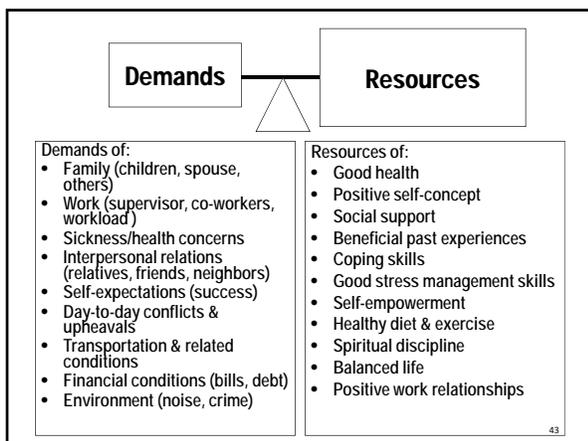
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Stress

"Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."

(Richard Lazarus)

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Suggestions for Self-Care
Personal Level

<u>Self Assessment</u>	<u>Health Behaviors</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of traumatic events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess triggers 2. Stress relief outside of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do what refreshes you? 3. Family & friends give feedback 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sleep 2. Exercise 3. Diet 4. Interpersonal Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive family & friends

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Work-Group Level

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Caseload <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vary your caseload - Mix more stable clients with distressed ones - End day with positive activity 2. Professional Hope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay hopeful- Give Hope 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alleviate workplace stressors 4. Professional Peer Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop collegial support group - Exchange feedback: compassion satisfaction, fatigue, burnout
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Additional Relief

EXERCISE & DIET	SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES
JOURNALING	"DO WHAT YOU ENJOY"
HOBBIES	REST
SOCIAL RELATIONS	MEDITATION
POSITIVE ADDICTION	

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Daily Practice

DEEP BREATHING

IMAGERY

EXERCISE

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

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Suggestions for Self-Care Agency Level

- What can agencies do to address staff stress, compassion fatigue and burnout?
- What can agencies do to promote compassion satisfaction?

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Assessment Instruments & Resources Idaho State University

ProQOL5 instrument from Idaho State University:

<http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/>

The ProQOL5 is helpful to self-assess compassion satisfaction, burnout, and compassion fatigue

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Headington Institute

<http://www.headington-institute.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1379>

Headington Institute scales with interpretation:

- How stressed are you?
- Are you showing signs of burnout?
- Self-care and lifestyle balance inventory

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Headington Institute

Managing staff in the face of stress and crises

- Assessing stress in your staff
- Helping your staff manage stress
- Taking care of your staff after trauma
- Organizational support activities
- Managing in crisis situations

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Authentic Happiness Website

<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>

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David Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages

<http://www.traumainformation.com/trauma.htm>

Figley Institute

<http://www.figleyinstitute.com/figleyinstitute.html>

Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project

<http://www.compassionfatigue.org/>

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University of Texas (Austin)

<http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/stress.html>

UT Counseling and Mental Health Services provides resources on stress management including auditory stress reduction exercises

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Resources for PTSD and the military

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/index.asp>

Gift from Within

<http://www.giftfromwithin.org/>

Sidran Institute

<http://sidran.org/index.cfm>

International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies

<http://www.istss.org/Home.htm>

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Sanctuary Model

Developing an organization philosophy and atmosphere that promotes individual and corporate health

<http://sanctuaryweb.com/sanctuary-model.php>

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Helpful APPS

PTSD Coach

Breathe 2 Relax (B2R)

Tactical Breather (TB)

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PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL) Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Very Often

1. I am happy.
2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.

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12. I like my work as a [helper].
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
29. I am a very caring person.
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

Stamm, Idaho State University

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Helping Staff Manage Stress

Headington Institute

The best general principle of helping your staff manage stress is: **Find out what about their work is causing them stress, and work with to develop a plan to manage that.** This will help staff feel heard, understood, invested in finding a solution to their problems, and in at least partial control of the work conditions they find difficult.

The following tips may also prove useful...

- **Be a good role model:** Model good work-life boundaries (take breaks during the day, limit evening and weekend work).
- **Seek to understand the local culture and normal grieving processes and methods of support:** Understanding cultural expectations will be especially important in effectively and sensitively supporting national staff.
- **Reduce environmental stressors:** As much as possible ensure staff have basic needs met (food, clean water, shelter and safety).
- **Basic management check: Review your basic management strategies:**
 - Are work goals clearly outlined to workers and timely feedback on achievement provided?
 - Are instructions clear?
 - Are deadlines reasonable? (especially in light of conflict between your demands and other supervisor's demands)?

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Have workers participated as much as possible in decisions that affect their work?

- **Educate staff:** Educate staff as to how stress and trauma affects the mind.
- **Clear and complete communication:** Communication about current conditions, crises and plans for future projects is crucial, especially in high-threat or disaster settings.
- **Regular in-office defusing:** Team members will benefit from regular times of simply sharing how their day has been and challenges they will be facing during the rest of the week. This can help people normalize difficulties, reduce anxiety and gain perspective. It can also help identify people who are regularly struggling or "stressed."
- **Regularly check in with how the staff you supervise are doing at a personal level:** Preferably at least once every couple of weeks.
- **Thank and affirm your staff:** There may be no one else doing that, and such appreciation can be a balm during hard times.
- **Schedule team building and social support enhancement activities:** Research suggests that anything you can do to strengthen relationships among your staff and their social support networks will be efforts well spent in helping staff cope with stress.

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