February 15, 2024

FLX MHD NEWSLETTER

Mental Health in our schools and community

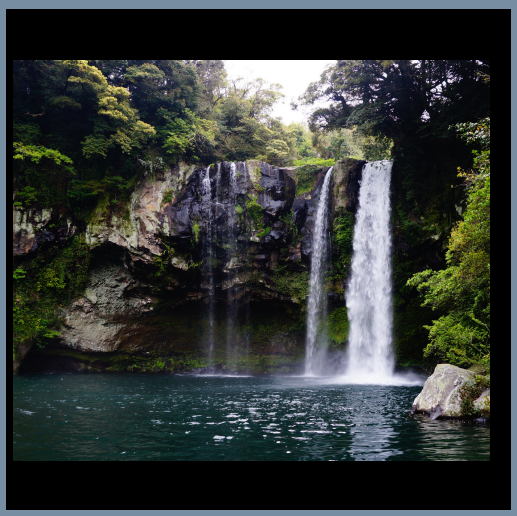
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Self Care and Burnout Prevention

Working in the mental health field is stressful work. Those in the helping and service-oriented professions (e.g., counselors, police, firefighters, teachers, nurses) may be prone to experiencing chronic high levels of stress. This can lead to burnout, the physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance and negative attitudes toward oneself or others. Helping professionals are also vulnerable to the impact of repeated exposure to the traumatic stories and experiences of patients which can lead to vicarious traumatization (secondary traumatization). The repeated emotionally intimate contact with trauma survivors can result in vicarious trauma which can manifest in intrusive thoughts, nightmares, emotional numbness, heighted anxiety and a shift in worldview. Known as the "cost of caring", compassion fatigue, emotional and physical exhaustion, and stress-related symptoms, may be experienced by mental health professionals after working with traumatized clients over an extended period of time. All mental health providers need to be wary of the potential for experiencing any or all three of these.

"The wise rest at least as hard as they work." — Mokokoma Mokhonoana





Here are things you can do to help prevent and assist should you find yourself experiencing these:

·Create a daily self-check routine where you look for areas of worry in your mind and areas of tension in your body. Explore what they may be associated with and investigate if necessary. Know the signs of professional distress and seek assistance.

·First things first, be intentional about self-care. Commit to good sleep habits, follow a healthy diet, be physically active, socialize and make time to relax.

·Develop a community of like- minded individuals that you can talk with which may include friends, family and other professionals. Creating a professional circle to offer consultation, supervision and to address signs of burnout or compassion fatigue can be very helpful.

Please click on the link below for a calendar of self-care ideas that can be done from the comfort of your home.

https://www.canva.com/design/DAF41oh4GAk/K_aa5j8Xzi1j6U6O_9ezQA/view?utm_content=DAF41oh4GAk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor

Educational Piece

Special Education Corner

It is a busy time for many Committee on Special Education teams. A change in calendar year often coincides with an increase in CSE meetings, especially annual reviews. The scheduled annual review of a student's individualized education plan (IEP) is a time for school teams, parents and students to review annual progress, measure present levels of performance, and to chart a course for the coming year. As a mental health service provider, you may be asked to contribute to the IEP by providing information regarding a student's social functioning which may be included in the Social Development section of the IEP. Offering a summary that reflects the student's ability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, manage and regulate their emotions and advocate for their needs will be an integral part of the IEP. Indicating any needs that student has that impact their educational progress is important and leads to the development of a related service goal. If you are providing counseling as a related service, you will be asked to write an annual goal. Goals should be thoughtfully created and indicate a specific skill or competency the student will be working toward attaining over the coming year. The IEP development process works best for students when the team of individuals working with the student and parents comes together to collaboratively develop the IEP.



IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Family and community engagement in schools is a crucial aspect of a student's educational experience. When parents, families, and communities actively participate in a child's education, it can have positive effects on academic achievement, student behavior, and overall school success. Here are some key points regarding family and community engagement in schools:

- **Engaging families in the child's learning process creates a partnership between the school and the home.**
- **School run programs can provide families supports and resources on topics including but not limited to health, parenting, literacy, and extracurricular activities**
- **Increase parent involvement which can result in Improved attendance, Increase in Literacy, and Lower rates of school dropouts**
- **Enhances parent education on children's academics. Enhances teacher education of family experiences and community needs.**
- **Strengthen family relationships, strengthens relationship between families and teachers, strengthens school reputation.**

Tips to Consider for Engagement

- Consider school and community population.
- Provide materials for parents in preferred language.
- Provide PBIS material & other informational materials for students and around schools in all languages.
- Offer home visits.
- Host family workshops.
- Provide effective and regular communication.
- Meet families where they are at.



Supervision Mid-Winter Check In



Here are a couple of things to add to a supervision meeting:

- How are things going after 5 ½ months ?
- The weeks are flying by. Take another look at timelines for task/goal completion.
- Remember to Breath !
- Review client progress.
- May is coming soon. In the next few weeks, begin to plan for the end of the college semester and internship.

Where are they now?



Dr. Alexsis E. Hernandez, PsyD. was an intern during the MHD 2021-22 cohort with the Sodus School District. Dr. Hernández currently serves as a student support services provider at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School, is the DEI subject matter specialist within the Rural Schools Mental Health Expansion Project, and will begin a post-doctoral fellowship at UNC Wilmington in August.

While reflecting on her time as an intern, Alexsis stated that the support she received from her supervisors, fellow interns, and the Sodus staff within the school helped her to strengthen her clinical skills and ignited a passion for supporting students, their families, and school professionals.

References:

Burnout Vs. Compassion Fatigue **(n.d). https://semo.edu/faculty-senate/_pdfs/burnout-vs-compassion-fatigue-handout.pdf**

Clay, R. (2022, July11). ***Are you experiencing compassion fatigue?*** **American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/compassion-fatigue**

ICA Notes Behavioral Health EHR (n.d). ***Understanding Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout: A Guide for Mental Health Therapists.*** **https://www.icanotes.com/2023/12/13/understanding-vicarious-trauma-compassion-fatigue-and-burnout-a-guide-for-mental-health-therapists/**