

PUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST

A self-care guide for
workers in child &
adolescent mental
health



CHILD & ADOLESCENT

MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

SELF-CARE WHY IT MATTERS



Child welfare workers experience higher rates of vicarious trauma, workplace stress, and compassion fatigue, when compared to other social service workers.

Working all day with children and adolescents who need extra support is no easy task.

Despite being extremely rewarding, working with children and adolescents can also be highly stressful and emotionally taxing.

Furthermore, it has also been reported child welfare workers are only engaging in self-care at moderate levels.

In order to continue providing a high level of support and service to children and adolescents under your care, you need to ensure self-care is prioritised.

WHAT DO I NEED TO WATCH FOR?

Challenges faced by workers in child and adolescent mental health can cause stress, disillusionment, compassion fatigue and burnout. Knowing and understanding the signs and symptoms is essential.

If you or someone you know is working in the industry and suffering with one or more of the below, mental health and wellbeing is at risk, and a self-care plan needs to be implemented.

- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability
- Depression
- Restlessness
- Isolation
- Avoiding certain duties
- Inability to empathise
- Inability to stop thinking about client/clients
- Sense of hypervigilance
- Physical tension - headaches, loss of appetite, sweats and nausea
- Feelings of failure
- Feeling a lack of purpose
- Flash-back experiences
- Reduced productivity
- Feeling unworthy
- Feeling unable to care about client/clients
- Inability to communicate with client/clients

TIPS FOR MENTAL WELLNESS



SUPERVISION & REPORTING

Whether you're working in a clinical setting or social work, ensure you have access to a supervisor or peer-support worker who you are able to sit down with regularly to discuss any instances at work that are causing you stress or concern. These sessions could be pre-scheduled for weekly or monthly check-ins, or available on an as-you-need-it basis.

Having this outlet will also enable you to seek advice or guidance on ways to move forward, discover why you might be feeling a certain way and collaborate on ways to overcome certain situations.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

Reflect and revise upon your current workload - this includes acknowledging when a case load may be too large and seeking assistance, or knowing which cases are causing you more distress and impacting on your ability to provide the highest level of support.

AWARENESS

Become aware of situations or reoccurring instances that may be causing changes in your mental or physical state. These may be triggers from unresolved personal instances, impacting on your ability to provide the best means of care. Additionally, these may also be signs and/or symptoms of feeling overwhelmed, burnt out or in need of self-care.

The sooner you can identify these oncoming symptoms, the sooner you can implement self-care practices to avoid mental or physical distress.

WORKPLACE MINDFULNESS

Self-care is not just limited to an individual. Organisations in social welfare are also responsible for putting caring practices into place, as well as training institutions to care about the professional integrity of their staff. By providing information and outlets for further support, it can then be at an individual's professional discretion to use these learned techniques to care for themselves, acknowledge concerns, and reach out when need be.



“

**If children feel
safe, they can
take risks, ask
questions, make
mistakes, learn to
trust, share their
feelings, and
grow. ”**

-

Alfie Kohn

SELF-CARE

5 QUICK TIPS

Use these tips as a guide to help you relax, recharge and spend time reflecting on the impact you're having in a career that changes lives.

START A POSITIVITY JOURNAL

A simple list of three things you're grateful for each day will cultivate greater mindfulness.

STAY ACTIVE

Getting 30 minutes of exercise a day is a proven method of boosting your mood.

BREAK OUT OF ROUTINE

Small changes can increase your brain's 'plasticity', increasing your ability to manage change.

IMPLEMENT SELF-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES

Self-soothing can reduce the effects of trauma - do this by engaging with your 5 senses.

CONNECT WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

Co-workers working in the same areas can easily empathise - make an effort to regularly connect and catch up.

JOIN US



CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Monday 28th - Wednesday 30th March 2022
Sea World Resort Conference Centre, Gold Coast

An event created to provide practical skills, relevant information, personal insight, and strategies for professionals committed to the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

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