

Responding to Feelings of Burnout

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information click on the links below:

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://www.psu.edu/>

<https://dodeagrants.org/>

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our *Suicide Prevention* series.

Important Reminders

Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this training?

Sometimes when professionals become burned out, they may not even recognize it in themselves. As the demands of work slowly increase over time, the symptoms may emerge slowly and feel “normal.” In addition, sometimes professionals may feel embarrassed that they are in need of help and feel that they should be able to manage their symptoms or work demands by themselves. Concerns about stigma and the tendency to minimize symptoms should not ever outweigh one’s willingness to examine their current functioning and ask for help. On the contrary, asking for help and demonstrating self-awareness is a sign of professional maturity and courage.

Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Evaluate your current level of burnout.

How confident are you in your ability to do this now?

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide40

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

Answered the survey question in the link.

Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.

Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

Research

What is most important for me to know?

According to the Compassion Satisfaction-Compassion Fatigue (CS-CF) model, burnout is one of the two negative effects of professional quality of life for professionals who care for others. The two negative effects are collectively known as compassion fatigue.

For more information click on the link below.

[Professional Quality of Life \(proqol.org\)](http://proqol.org)



Burnout is linked with feelings of hopelessness as well as perceived inability to perform one's job effectively. The onset of feelings associated with burnout are often gradual in nature and may reflect the feeling that your professional efforts have no impact. Additionally, the feelings associated with burnout can emerge when there is an extreme workload or having a perceived non-supportive work environment.

Secondary Trauma is the other element of Compassion fatigue. In this model, secondary trauma refers to a professional's secondary exposure to extremely stressful events in their professional practice. Secondary trauma differs from burnout in that the onset of symptoms are usually rapid and associated with one particular event. Symptoms may include fear, insomnia, having unsettling thoughts of the event on a somewhat frequent basis, or avoidance of anything that can be construed as a reminder of the upsetting event.

Application

How might this look in my professional practice?

The objective of this training is to:

Evaluate your current level of burnout.

1. In order to best get a picture of how you may be functioning, download and complete the [Professional Quality of Life Scale](#) (Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue version).
2. Once you have answered the questions, follow the directions provided on subsequent pages of the measure to score your responses and get your results
3. When you have interpreted whether your scores fall in the areas of Low, Average, or High, consider the following:
 - a) For Compassion Satisfaction — If your score is High or Average, what factors do you think contribute to your satisfaction in this area? What can you do to ensure that this continues? If on the Compassion Satisfaction area your score is Low, what factors do you think contribute to your relative lack of satisfaction? What might you need to help increase your satisfaction?

- b) For the Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress scales — If your score is Low, what factors do you think contribute to your feelings in these areas? What can you do to ensure that these levels remain low? If on the Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress scales your score is High, what factors do you think contribute to your feelings? What support do you need to begin reducing these feelings of burnout and traumatic stress?

Implementation

How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.

Implementation Strategies

- Provide structured and clear processes for school personnel to address challenges in the workplace including mentoring, coaching, and ongoing training to avoid unhealthy climate among personnel.
- Make it a practice to start your day with realistic goals, include breaks throughout your day, and end the day with an opportunity to reflect on what went well, what areas you may need support, and a plan for the evening to recharge for the next day.

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- When a teacher or staff member is known to have many stressors, is struggling with burnout, or other problems, it is important that that person receives the support that they need from leadership. This includes yourself, if applicable.
- Provide scaffolding to school personnel to help them reframe how they approach interactions with other professionals and parents. Teaching and modeling ideas like “the feedback sandwich” (positive – constructive – positive feedback), SMART goals, and growth mindset, may help to support a more positive climate in schools among professionals.

Collaboration Strategies

- Provide ongoing training, referrals for support, and guidance as needed to any school personnel who are struggling.
- Engage in personal therapy, active self-care, and other strategies to minimize burnout or help with secondary trauma.

Resources

Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:aac12d09-8756-45a8-bbef-a64f3b1c185a>

Feedback

How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Recognize age-appropriate grief reactions in your students.

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide40

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

Answered all of the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

Additional Readings

Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

Professional Quality of Life. (n.d.). Retrieved November 02, 2020, from https://proqol.org/Home_Page.php

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at schoolresources@psu.edu.

Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Self-Care*. In this training, you will identify work-related self-care strategies to prevent professional burnout.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_41-self-care_201022/

Return to the module directory

Click on this button to return to the module directory.

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/>