

Public Health Nurse Resilience during COVID 19

MIRIAM SILMAN, MSW,
TRAUMA INFORMED CARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
DEPARTMENT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL AND
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Road Map

- Psychological impact of COVID-19 and the unique effects on you as DPH Nurses
- A few coping strategies to manage the stress from the current triple threat: COVID-19, opioid epidemic, racial trauma

Self-Awareness Reminder

Pay attention to your own needs & responses

Take care of yourself however you need to during the presentation

You may be impacted even after you leave

Use coping skills that help you metabolize your responses to trauma

Find a safe space in which you can process your experiences – this may mean using coping strategies including talking to colleagues, friends, family, or a professional provider



What are you..

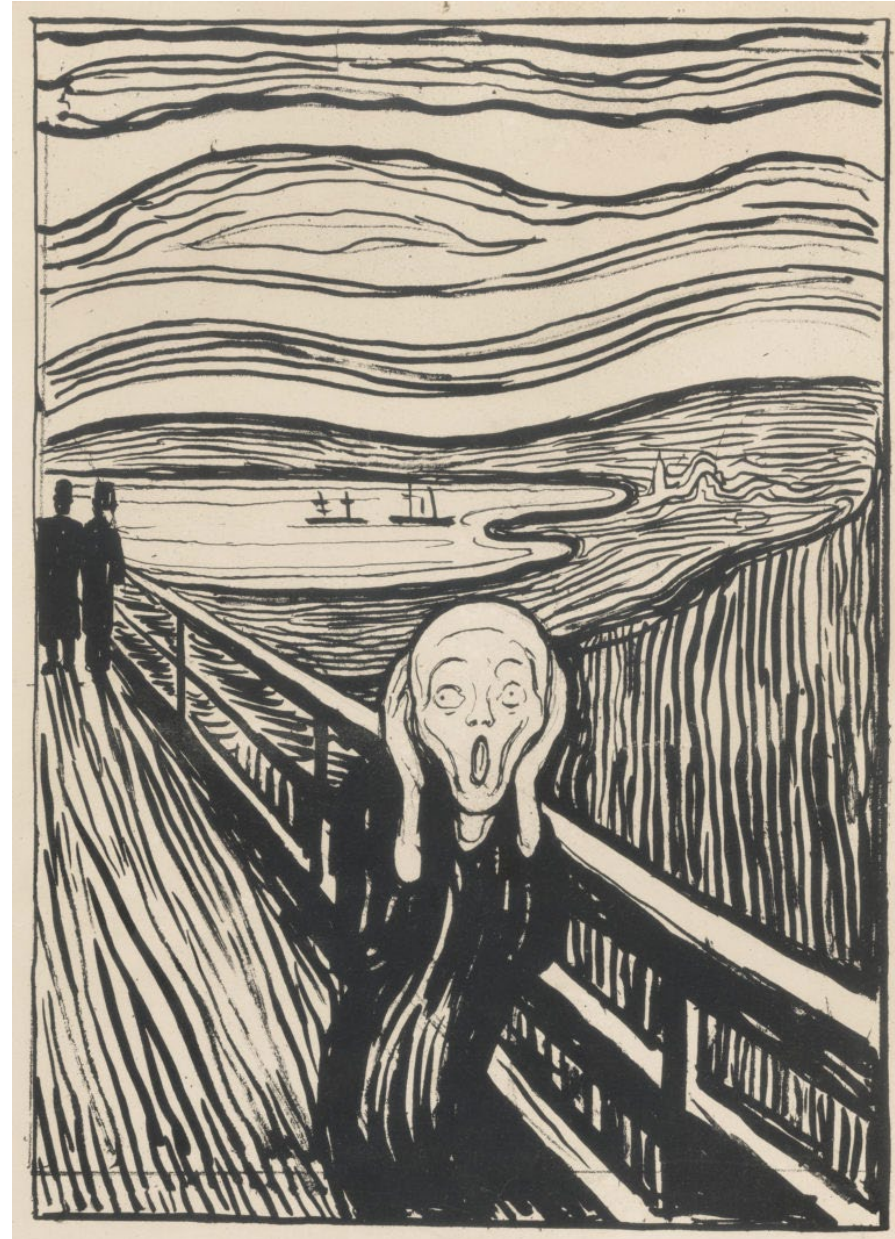
feeling?

thinking?

needing?



Impact of COVID-19



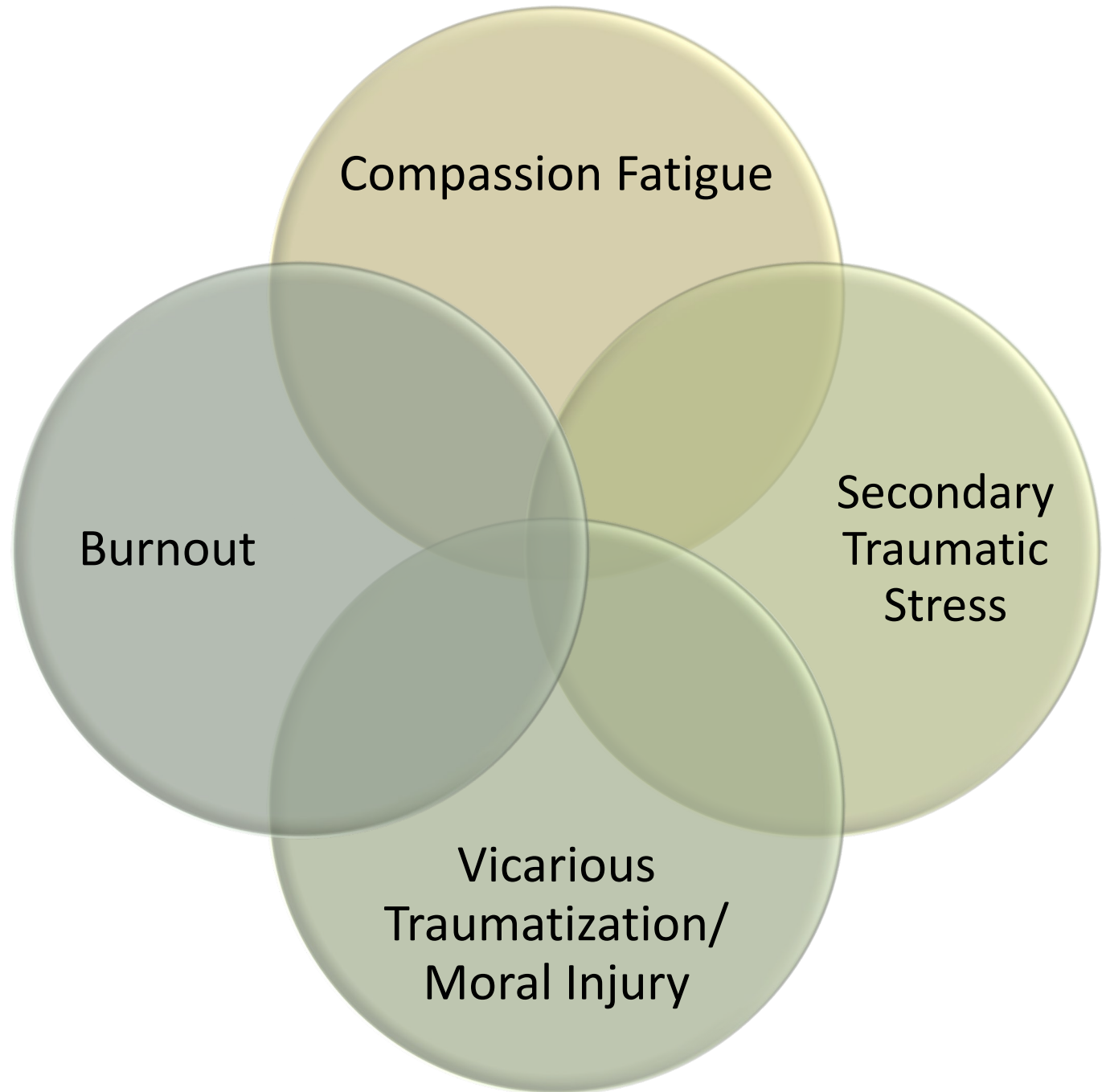
Sources of Stress for PH Staff

- Anxiety over exposure & contagion of self & others
- Stress of being at home, concern about future childcare
- Integrating work & life
- Isolation, disconnection
- Financial stress
- Uncertainty, so many changes
- Anxiety about health of patients
- PPE makes work harder
- Concern about psychological well-being of patients
- Feeling powerless to help within current limitations
- Grief, lack of closure
- Racial trauma in our world

Increased Risk of Psychological Distress during COVID 19

- History of trauma
- Recent loss or history of significant loss
- Pre-existing behavioral health concern (anxiety, depression, etc.)
- Limited external support system
- Sense of isolation, poor attachment, lack of connection to others
- Poor emotion regulation, limited problem-solving skills
- Additional concurrent stressors (job loss, single parenting, etc.)

Workplace Threats to Worker Resilience



Compassion Fatigue

- “the cost of caring” (*Figley*)
- “the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another” (*NCTSN*)
- “gradual erosion of...our empathy, our hope, and of course our compassion – not only for others but also for ourselves” (*Mathieu*)

Secondary Traumatic Stress

- “the natural, consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced or suffered by a person” (*Figley, 1995*)
- Exposure to secondary trauma manifests in signs and symptoms of traumatic stress

Responses to COVID-19 Stress: Physical Responses

- Exhaustion
- Sleep disturbance
- Muscle tension, headaches, migraines, muscle twitches
- GI problems, nausea
- Weight changes

Responses to COVID-19 Stress: Emotional Responses

- Anxiety, fear, obsessive concerns
- Depression, hopelessness, isolation, suicidality
- Irritability, anger, impatience; emotional hyper-reactivity
- Emotional lability or dysregulation; lowered affect tolerance

Responses to COVID-19 Stress: Cognitive Responses

- Hopelessness, sense of futility, disempowerment
- Powerlessness, ineffectiveness
- Loss of creativity & innovation
- Ruminating on negative thoughts
- Inability to find the positive
- Poor concentration, poor memory, difficulty making decisions

Responses to COVID-19 Stress: **Social/ Interpersonal Responses**

- Impatience
- Intolerance
- Anger, irritability, argumentativeness
- Negative about & towards others
- Social withdrawal, unable to enjoy anything
- Poor boundaries: too close or too far

Responses to COVID-19 Stress:

Behavioral Responses

- Angry, aggressive, defensive
- Hyperarousal, hyper-reactivity, hypervigilance
- Lowered impulse control
- Increased substance use, self-harm, maladaptive coping behaviors
- Increased risk-taking
- Poor self-care
- Avoidance of others or work (increased absenteeism)

Protective Factors & Strategies

Take care of your body; take care of your mind

Maintain a routine

Stay connected; do something for others

Actively address racism

Avoid re-traumatization

Build Compassion Satisfaction



Take Care of Your Body



Healthy Food



Exercise Regularly



Sleep Enough

Take Care of Your Mind



Positivity & Hope



Mindfulness



Gratitude

Self-Compassion: Grace & Forgiveness

Extend to yourself what you give to others

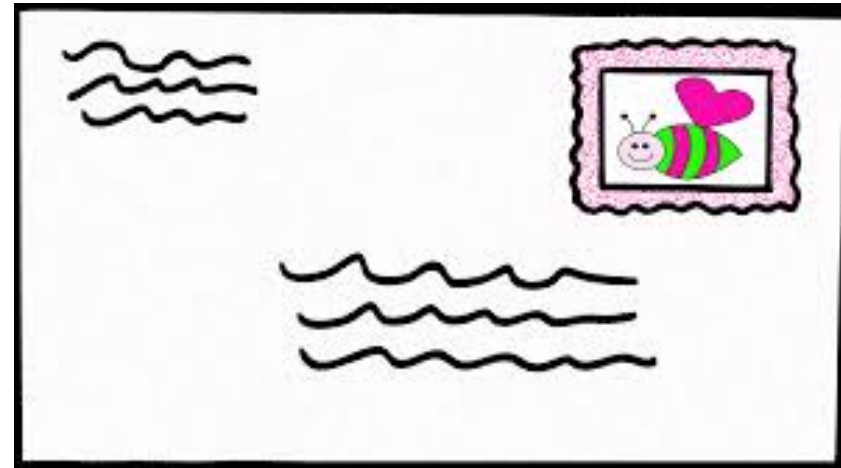
3 Components:

1. Self-kindness
2. Common humanity
3. Mindful self-awareness

What to do:

- Positive self-talk
- Visualize how you would respond to a friend or colleague
- Notice your own suffering & Seek support. Ask for help!

Stay Connected Professionally & Personally



Do Something for Others



Tiny SURVIVAL GUIDE

PROTECT YOUR MORNINGS

[or whenever you wake up]
less cortisol, more intentionality



GO OUTSIDE

[or look outside]
perspective, context +
something larger than this



BE ACTIVE

[avoid stagnation]
in body, mind, spirit

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

those that are edifying + healthy

NURTURE GRATITUDE

what is one thing, right now,
that is going well?

SIMPLIFY

[less is more]
be mindful of decision
fatigue + cognitive overload



ADMIRE ART

the gift of feeling transported



LAUGH

pure humor = a sustaining force

FOSTER HUMILITY & EXTEND GRACE

self-righteousness
+ hubris = unhelpful

zzz...



GO OUTSIDE

[or look outside]

perspective, context +
something larger than this



BE ACTIVE

[avoid stagnation]

in body, mind, spirit

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

those that are edifying + healthy

NURTURE GRATITUDE

what is one thing, right now,
that is going well?



DETOX

if navigating addictions,
be wise + safe

SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS

↓ stress hormones, ↑ comfort



fatigue + cognitive overload

ADMIRE ART

the gift of feeling transported



LAUGH

pure humor = a sustaining force

FOSTER HUMILITY & EXTEND GRACE

self-righteousness
+ hubris = unhelpful



SLEEP

to cleanse + repair brain + body

CLARIFY INTENTIONS

how can i refrain from causing harm,
how can i contribute meaningfully?

The Tiny Survival Guide

Available at:

www.traumastewardship.com

COVID-19 Losses, Opioid Epidemic & Racial Trauma: Collective Loss, Grief & Sorrow

- Losses are both tangible & intangible, ambiguous & clear
 - We've lost people, relationships, connections; control & certainty; a sense of safety, a sense of future; personal freedoms & choices; part of our identity
- Often there is an absence of a sense of closure
- Grief changes, comes & goes
- Grief is how loss heals
- Past grief may be triggered

Low-Impact Debriefing/ Processing

1. Self-Awareness
2. Fair Warning
3. Consent
4. Limited Disclosure

Copyright 2019, TEND Academy: www.tendacademy.ca



What to Do about Grief & Loss during Social Distancing?

- Stay connected to others
- Lean in to the grief – feel it for periods of time, and then move away from it
- Name it, claim it, tame it
- Acknowledge the ambiguities & inconsistencies
- Honor our losses in virtual ways
- Allow space & time for positives

Balancing Fatigue & Satisfaction

Integrating work with life

Integrating empathy & compassion with healthy boundaries

Integrating assistance & advocacy; help with building independence & self-reliance



Build Compassion Satisfaction



Compassion Satisfaction



Compassion Fatigue

Recognize & Celebrate

- Moments of grace
- Moments that give you goosebumps



Recognize, share, celebrate, remember these moments

How You Can Help Co-Workers

- Model calm, self-regulated responses
- Provide resources, teach & model co-regulation
- Promote honest communication
- Acknowledge grief, loss & sorrow; talk about it
- Seek creative opportunities for contact across social distancing boundaries
- Support, support, support...
- Repeat, repeat, repeat...

Implement Protective Strategies

- Remain aware of stress and grief responses in yourself and others; a range of responses is normal
- Take care of body *and* mind to maintain well-being
- Connections count, regular routines help
- Gratitude, hope and self-compassion promote well-being
- Build compassion satisfaction; minimize potential re-traumatization

Reflection: Set 2 Intentions

*What is one thing you can **do for yourself** starting tomorrow to promote resilience?*

*What is one thing you can **change in your workplace** to promote resilience?*

Remember

You are not alone.

We will get through this together.

We are #TeamKentucky.



Miriam Silman, MSW

Project AWARE/Trauma Informed Care Program
Administrator

Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

275 East Main Street 4W-F

Frankfort, Kentucky 40621

miriam.silman@ky.gov

502-782-3662