

building staff resiliency with a little TLC

the use of therapeutic lifestyle choices to mitigate burn-out and increase staff retention



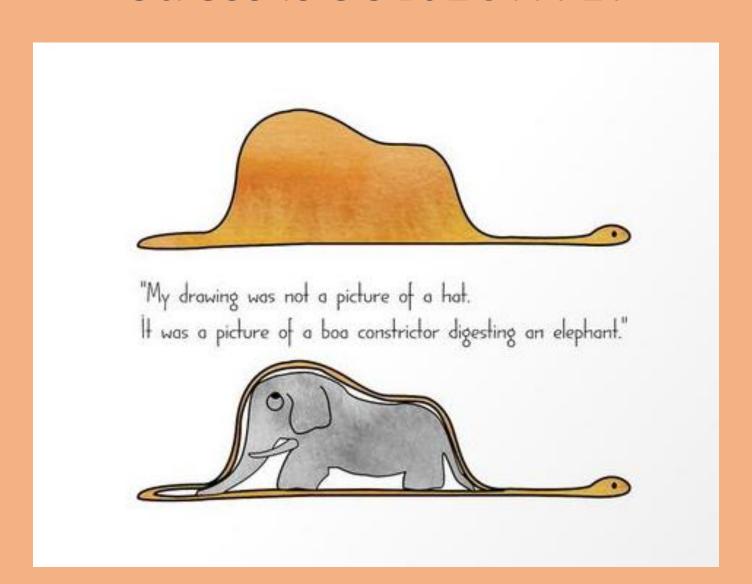
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Who are you? You know...front line staff, clinician, administrator, etc...

Stress is SUBJECTIVE!



On a scale of 1 - 10, how stressed are you?

Me:



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no, seriously, it wasn't rhetorical. how stressed are YOU?

Impact of Stress



The COVID-19
pandemic has had a
substantial impact on
the lives of all
Americans, and it will
continue to do so.



It has disrupted work, education, health care, the economy, and relationships, with some groups more negatively impacted than others.



Relatively uncharted waters as we navigate more than two years of the pandemic.

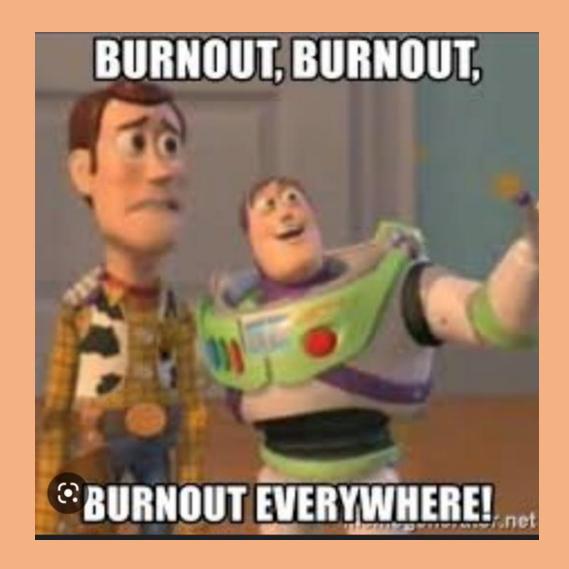
"Chronic Workplace Stress"

- Depletion/exhaustion
- Negativism / cynicism
- Poor professional efficacy

Mental Health
Professionals by
nature have stressful
jobs

 Long hours, clients in crisis, compassion fatigue, pressure

77% of US counties have a mental health professional shortage



Walking to the door of my job and wondering if I should just leave and never come back



Me trying to remember the last time we were fully staffed at work



burned out staff = turnover

Turnover impacts everyone

Program success depends on recruitment and retention of effective, motivated, and experienced workers.

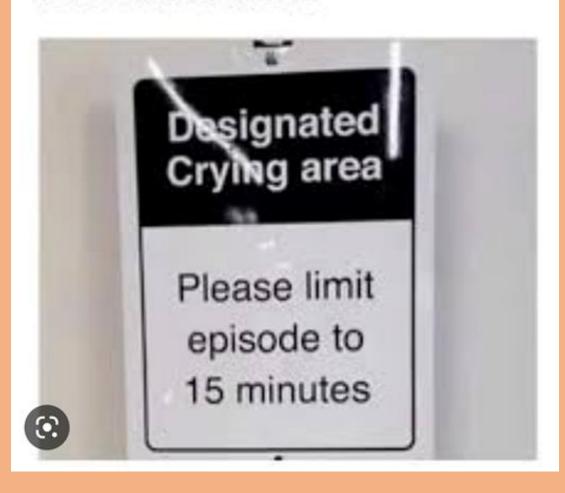
Turnover disrupts the continuity of programs and affects youth in program

Most studies on human service workers have examined high turnover rates among child protective workers.

The impact on frontline staff working with children and youth is disproportionately high.

how do we maintain the wellbeing of our staff in this climate?

Every work place should have one of these



Adversity + Adaptation

Resilience

"Be a tennis ball, not a bowling ball."

-Me

FACTORS CORRELATED WITH LOWER BURN OUT

SENSE OF COHERENCE

Reflects one's perception of life as being comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful

SELF-CARING BEHAVIOR

Team supervision, work-life balance, physical health, social support

PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY

Subjective belief in one's ability to execute the actions required to manage situations

Resiliency IS about systematically building competency.

Resiliency IS NOT about correcting weakness.

Attachment sense of relatedness

Mastery
Motivation
mastering
developmental
tasks

Self-Regulation emotional and behavioral Impulse
Control
cognitive
development and
learning

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Serve as a buffer against existing stress

Preventative against future adverse experiences

Cyclical - Not only the presence of relationship at the time of adversity but also the fact that one must develop/maintain the skills to have the relationship

Attachment sense of relatedness

Mastery
Motivation
mastering
developmental
tasks

Self-Regulation emotional and behavioral Impulse
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Increases self-efficacy

Driven by curiosity and is intrinsically rewarding; leads to the development of problem solving skills

Direct and indirect learning are associated with expectations of our own efficacy which impacts how we interact with the world around us

Attachment sense of relatedness

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Self-Regulation emotional and behavioral Impulse
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Emotional reactivity and struggles with self-regulation are associated with poor mental health and/or behavioral difficulties

Dysregulation of emotions and behaviors and Impulse Control challenges are two sides of the same coin

Self-regulation is our way of maintaining overall homeostasis

ncrease these

Sense of Coherence

Self-Caring Behaviors

Perceived Self-Efficacy

Attachments
Sense of Mastery
Self Regulation
Impulse Control

And you get

RESILIENCE

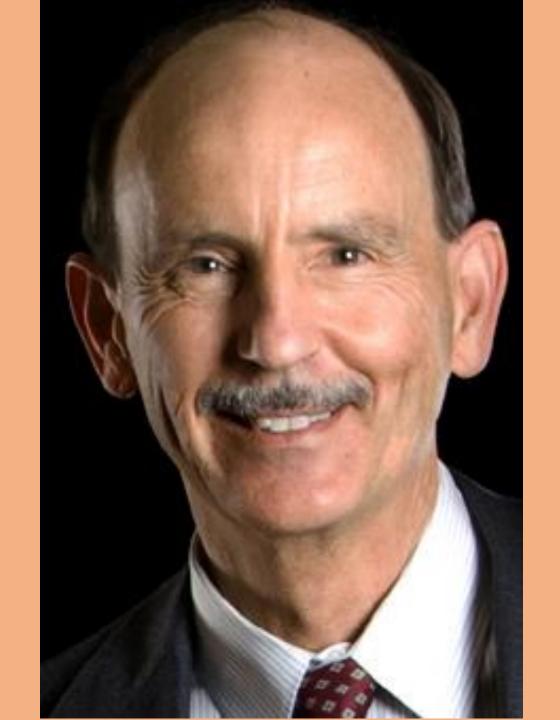
AND increased retention, decreased turnover, healthier staff, kick ass treatment of kids, save the world

Neat. Now what?

Lifestyle and Mental Health

Roger Walsh *American Psychologist*January 17, 2011

"TLCs are sometimes as effective as either psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy and can offer significant therapeutic advantages."



Therapeutic Lifestyle Choices

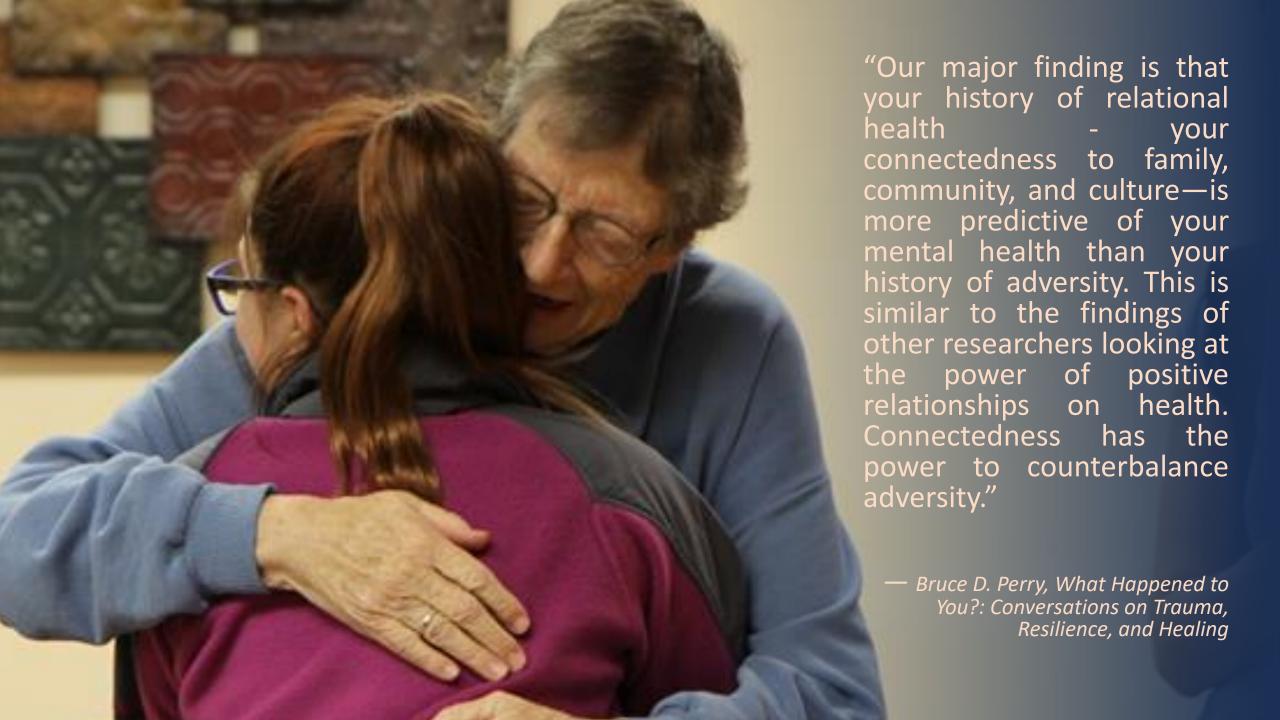


RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the core of our human experience.

We have relationships with ourselves, with our families, mentors, students, and peers.

The therapy relationship is repeatedly shown through research to be more consistently impactful than the therapy method.



"Think about how you've handled difficulty in your own life. With things that are very hard to deal with, you don't want to talk about the pain or loss or fear for forty-five minutes nonstop. You want to talk with a really good friend for maybe two or three minutes about some aspect of it. When it gets too painful, you step back, you want to be distracted. And maybe you want to talk more later on. It is the therapeutic dosing that leads to real healing. Moments. Fully present, powerful, and brief."

— Bruce D. Perry, What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing



NATURE

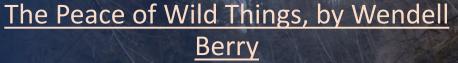
Decrease in levels of the stress hormone cortisol

Decrease in sympathetic nerve activity (fight or flight response)

Decrease in subsequent resting blood pressure

Decrease in subsequent resting heart rate

Additionally, cortisol levels in Individuals simply gazing on forest scenery for 20 minutes are lower than individuals in urban settings



When despair grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought

of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting for their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



SERVICE

Volunteering can inhibit anti-social behavior.

By helping others, individuals may develop stronger networks that buffer stress and reduce disease risk.

Volunteering can foster trust and intimacy and encourage the provider to anticipate that reciprocal help will be forthcoming when it is needed.



"The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

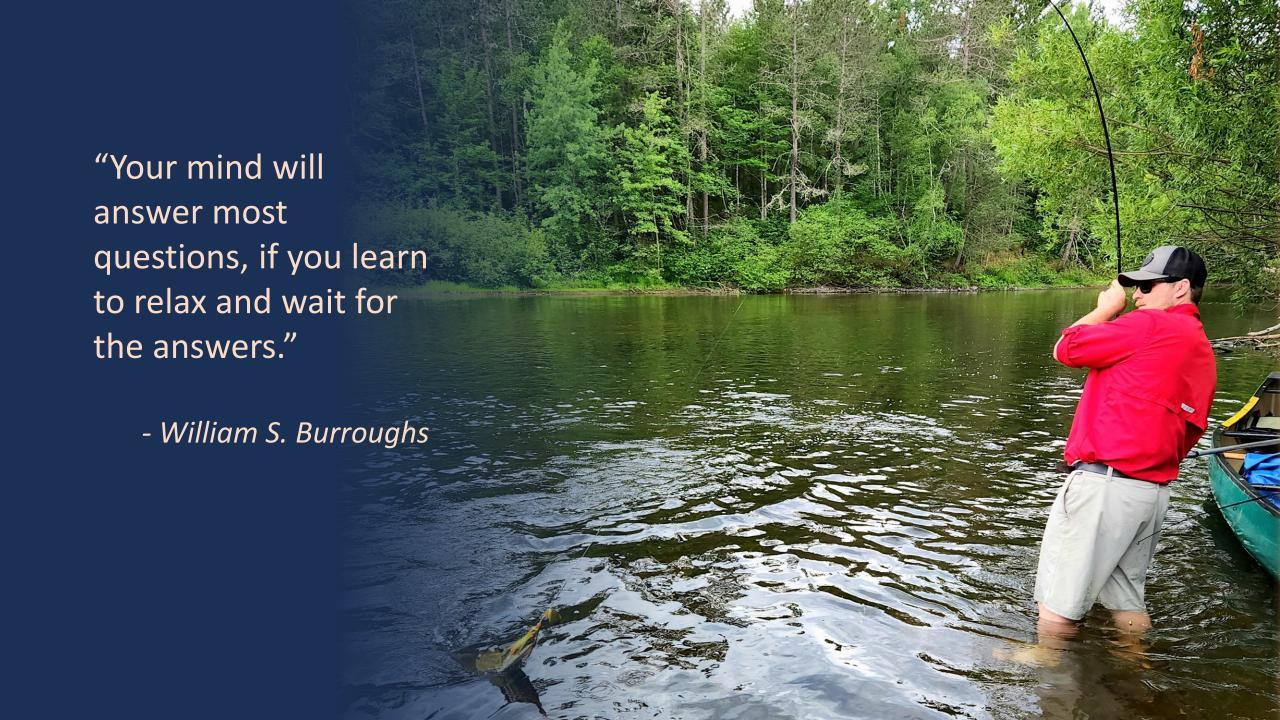
-Muhammad Ali

RELAXATION

Relaxation means taking a break from the normal routine.

Healthy, balanced relaxation can include formal approaches like yoga, qi-gong, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation. It can also overlap with other factors such as time spent in nature and exercise.

Relaxation and Stress management promote mindfulness, and viseversa.



RECREATION

Positive Emotions are therapeutic

Recreational
(REcreational)
activities
create
opportunities
for joy,
humor, and
mastery

Decreased stress

Enhanced mood

Support immune function and healing



The body heals with play, the mind heals with laughter, and the spirit heals with joy.

-Proverb

NUTRITION

Adequate
quantity and
adequate quality
nutrition heavily
influence physical
and mental
health and
resilience

A nutrient dense
"whole-foods"
based diet has
been correlated
with a decrease
risk of developing
depression
among adults
(and likely moreso in children)

There is a powerful "gut-brain" connection

95% of body's
Serotonin
produced in the
gut, 50% of the
dopamine



EXERCISE

Exercise has been linked to improved self-esteem, energy, concentration, and sleep

Well-rested + confident + energetic + focused = resilient Physical exercise serves as a positive stress on our brains and bodies. It stimulates beneficial hormones and proteins that repair our neurons and help us feel good



SPIRIT

Religious practices
that contribute to selfregulation and
reducing self-focus
and worry while
providing a calming
effect are positively
associated with
mental health.

Among adults greater religiousness has been linked to lower levels of depression, and faster recovery from depressive episodes.

Contemplative
Spiritual/Religious
practices are
correlated with
greater psychological
wellbeing and reduced
stress







Where and how do you find these therapeutic lifestyle choices integrating in your own life?

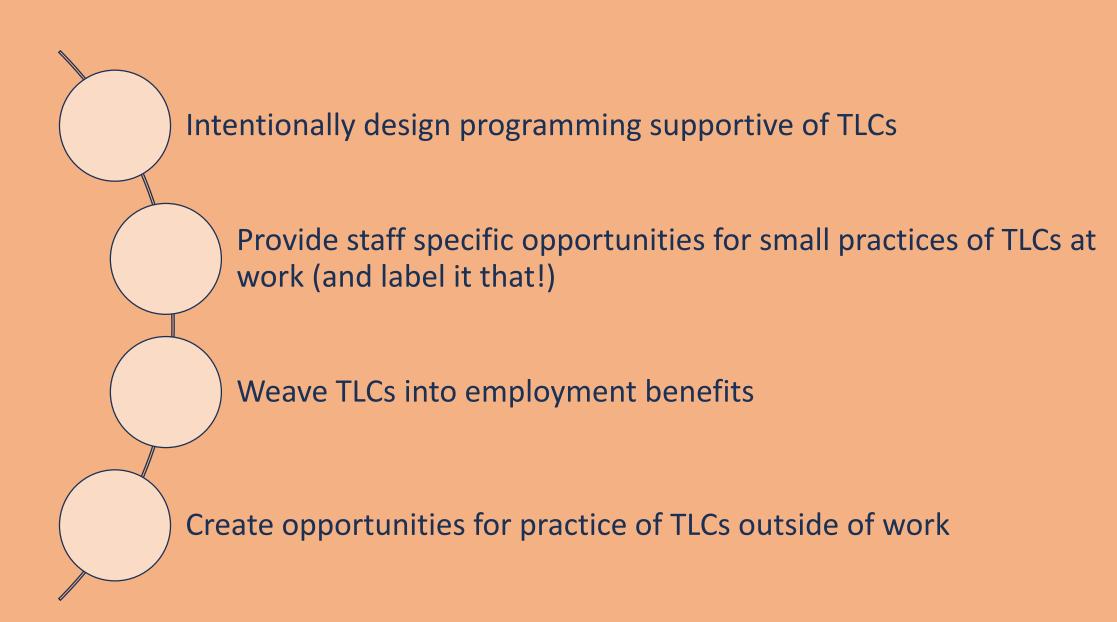
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Where and how do you find these TLCs integrating into your own life?

How do we integrate therapeutic lifestyle choices into the lives of our employees?

Teach, reteach, then teach some more!



Intentional Programming

Staff do whatever the kids are doing so fill the program with intentional opportunities to:

Program in nature

Provide well rounded nutrition

Move their bodies

Give back through community service projects

Cultivate
new
hobbies
and master
new
activities

Connect with each other

Daily mindfulness /relaxation

Little Practices Opportunities @ Work



Employee Benefits

PassageWay Days Gym membership discounts

Wellness Initiatives Longevity
"bonuses"
related to TLCs

Big Practice Opportunities

Social groups/clubs

Provide access to tools

Formal planned events



And you get

RESILIENCE

AND increased retention, decreased turnover, healthier staff, kick ass treatment of kids, save the world



Being Purposeful

Being purposeful increases motivation, decreases stress and decreases burn out

The "why" and "what" of our work

Stress shifts our focus away from the "why" and onto the "what" however it is the "why" that can help us overcome the stress!

How to be Purposeful

Craft a purposeful mindset

- "So, that" mentality
- Ask better questions
- Tell better stories

Connect to THE purpose and YOUR purpose

- What's the bigger picture and our role within it
- Explain the "why" before the "what"
- Draw connections between small tasks

Create a culture of mattering

- Make it easy for people to see their purpose
- "If it wasn't for you"



Attachments
Sense of Mastery
Self Regulation
Impulse Control



Sense of Coherence Self-Caring Behaviors Perceived Self-Efficacy

RESILIENCE

Purpose & Mattering



Questions?

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Resources:

- Resilience documentary
- fosteringfutureswisconsin.org
- What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience and Healing. Bruce D. Perry & Oprah Winfrey 2021.
- nwpltd.org/passageway
- Walsh, R. (2011 January 17) Lifestyle and Mental Health. American Psychologist
- Prince-Embury, S., & Prince-Embury, S. (2007). Resiliency scales for children and adolescents: A profile of personal strengths. San Antonio, TX.: Harcourt Assessment.