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Territory Insurance Conference resilient future

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What About Me?

Maintaining Personal Resilience

Whilst Working in Injury Management

What about you?

Working in the work health & injury management industry isn't easy.

- Dealing with legislation & organisational demands
- Dealing with people facing difficult circumstances
- Managing input & expectations from multiple stakeholders
- Youth & inexperience might be on your side
- Workplace cultural issues might be apparent
- Training & development might be poorly prioritised in the context of organisational demands and direction.

(1)

What about you?

Annual staff turnover within industry is estimated at around 30%

- Lack of stability makes institutional change difficult
 - What is learned by individuals gets lost to the organisation
 - The infrastructure to support new staff is never obtained
 - Good ideas get forgotten or go missing
 - New employees fall short on the recommended dose of industry training to practice competently
 - Inexperienced staff are exposed to demands and expectations beyond their means
- (2)

What is Burnout?

A recognised syndrome comprising;

- Emotional exhaustion
 - feeling spent physically & emotionally
- Depersonalization
 - cynical attitude & impersonal approach
- Lack of personal accomplishment
 - sense of getting nowhere or not making difference. (3)

Whilst not featuring in the DSM, Burnout is recognized as a diagnosable condition in the ICD-10 (Code Z73.0)

Stages of Burnout

Stage 1 - Stress Arousal

- Persistent irritability
- Low frustration tolerance
- Persistent anxiety
- Heart palpitations
- Insomnia/sleep disturbance
- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Narrowing perspective
- Reduced sense of humour
- Teeth grinding
- Muscular tension
- Elevated blood pressure
- Headaches

(4)

Stages of Burnout

Stage 2 - Energy Conservation ('Brownout')

- Disengaged work style
- Reduced attendance at work
- Late or struggle to get going
- Lethargy/fatigue
- Procrastination
- Reduced productivity
- Trouble with deadlines
- Getting even with the company
- Social withdrawal
- Cynical attitudes
- Apathetic
- Blaming or Resentful
- Increased caffeine use
- Increased substance use
- Increased health problems

(4,5)

Stages of Burnout

Stage 3 - Exhaustion

- Depressed mood
- Feeling hopeless/helpless
- Chronic stomach/bowel problems
- Lower back pain
- Chronic headaches
- Chronic fatigue (mental/physical)
- Prolonged absenteeism
- Preoccupation with health
- Disenfranchised
- Want to escape or 'drop out' from society
- Increased self harm risk

(4)

Causes of Burnout

Bureaucratic atmosphere & excessive workload are recognised as key contributing factors. (6)

Work-related stressors are only part of the problem.

- Nothing in or of itself causes stress.
- Whilst we might think about events, situations or people as stressors they are all just stimuli
- Stress results from how we relate to situations & demands

Causes of Burnout

Who we are and how we relate to what we do are also critical parts of the picture

Personality characteristics

- Perfectionists, anxious worriers, 'Type A' personalities, are more prone to burn out.

Engagement Style

- Job Burnout is “a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.” (7)

Causes of Burnout

Engagement Style

- When demand changes and we aren't consulted or don't agree
- When the dynamics of key relationships change
- When real or perceived promises don't materialise
- When our expectations are repeatedly dashed

Psychological Contract Theory

- We perceive an exchange agreement between ourselves & our employer. Separate to the contract of employment, the psych contract relates to the unspoken beliefs about reciprocal obligations between us & the employer. (8)

The Consequences of Burnout

- Poor health outcomes
- Reduced quality of care
- Increased errors in decision making
- Ethical misconduct
- Reduced productivity/ poor outcomes
- Decline in relationship quality
- Poor staff retention

(9)

The Consequences of Burnout

According to Bevis.....

- The consequence of cynical & impersonal attitudes (Depersonalisation) in case management contributes to amplified illness behaviour in claimants and hyper-maternal responses in treatment providers.
- Client outcomes get lost to effect of ‘splitting’, bickering between parents, & restoring justice to the psych contract.

Off topic points to consideration

- How much 'burnout' are we ignoring when it comes to our complex claimants/ clients?
- What happens if/when we inherit an employers' cynical or impersonal attitude toward a claimant?
- What did one burnout say to the other burnout?
- Can organisations or even industries suffer burnout?

Resilience - Prophylactic for Burnout

- Resilience is the ability to persist in the face of adversity.
- It is also protective against burnout and a key characteristic for psychological wellbeing
- Consists of specific skills, attitudes and approaches to engagement.

Ingredients for Resilience

Self care - Practicing regular activity that counteract the stress/arousal response

Self awareness - Knowing who you are and how to manage your vulnerabilities in the context of others

Good Relationships - Cultivating & maintaining nourishing relationships

Competence - Knowing what you need to know & feeling confident about what you do

Healthy Attitude - Toward self, others, problems, successes

Taking action - Control what you can, let go of what you can't control & be able to spot the difference

Self-care

Stress and arousal are normal BUT we must counteract the stress response

Find what helps you unwind and commit to it

- **Creative** - cook, draw, express, play, tinker, laugh
- **Active** - exercise, gym, yoga, volunteer, gardening
- **Passive** - relax, meditate, pamper, faith
- **Escape** - take your breaks, go on holidays, travel

Self-care

- No one will do your self-care for you
- No one will respect your needs if you don't
- Things change with time... so should you
- Starting new things is stressful... be patient
- Some is better than none at all.
- It's OK to suck at it. (Its not a competition)

Self-Awareness

- Do you struggle to say no?
- Do you over commit or try hard to gain approval?
- Do you constantly doubt yourself
- Do you depend on reassurance from others?
- Are you defensive or sensitive when it comes to getting feedback?
- Are you hypercritical of your and/or other peoples shortcomings or mistakes?

These are features of personality that lend themselves to burnout

Self-Awareness

- Knowing who we are and understanding how we engagement helps us manage our interpersonal vulnerabilities and the idiosyncratic risks of burnout
- Self-awareness also helps us understand and attend to what gives us meaning at work.

Good Relationships

- Positive relationships with family, friends & peers are highly protective.
- Spending time with people that nurture our experiences & allow us the space to share our feelings.
- Maintaining good relationships with clients colleagues, & stakeholders is important too

Good Relationships

Pick the ones that taste like this;

- Openness & honesty in communication
- Conflict is accommodated
- Non-critical or judgemental of person
- Flexible & non-demanding
- Mutually rewarding
- Offer compassion & understanding
- Provide feelings of safety & belonging.

Good Relationships

What cultivates the good ones?

- Being generous and respectful
- Giving what you are willing to give without expectation
- Listening genuinely and giving your full attention.
- Seeking to understand
- Being clear with your limits
- Asking for what you need (no more, no less).
- Accepting differences
- Admitting to mistakes and apologising
- Forgive others for their mistakes

Competence

- Insist on getting the training & supervision you need to understand & do your job effectively
- Seeking the training you need rather than trying to get by without is more productive in the long run.
- Put your training into practice, appreciating that it can feel awkward or stressful.
- Feeling anxious about asking questions is normal (especially in front of others). Ask them anyway.
- Respect the learning cycle and what it's like to be at each stage

Competence

Stages of learning



Competence

- Commit to life-long learning
- Take advantage of outside training opportunities; conferences, night or weekend courses, read relevant to your field of interest.
- Get involved in opportunities and experiences to develop your skills and confidence in other areas.
- The knowledge and expertise of others is an excellent 'real time' learning tool.

Healthy Attitude

Relating to problems

- See adversity as temporary & look on obstacles as opportunities.
- Accept your part in mistakes and seek to solve problems

Relating to successes

- Stop. Take the time to notice when things go well
- Reflect on your efforts and pat your own back
- Accept your part in successes and acknowledge praise

Healthy Attitude

Relating to self

- Practice self-compassion
- Accepting of imperfections

Relating to others

- Everyone is giving life their best shot
- Everyone is on their own journey
- Find what there is to appreciate in others

Taking action

What's Controllable?

- Commitment to self-care
- Investment in relationships
- How you act and what example you set
- How much you respect yourself
- The limits and boundaries you set with others
- The goals you set and expectations you hold

Taking action

What's Beyond our Control?

- The decisions of others
- The actions or behaviours of others
- How others feel about what we do
- Change & loss

Suffering stems from attaching to things with the expectation that they will not change – Zen Philosophy

Cultivate a healthy workplace

What's rewarded in your workplace?

- The attitudes & behaviours of leaders and champions will typically inform organisation culture and be adopted by others
- Resilience must be modelled for it to be adopted as sanctioned behaviour
- Whilst difficult at times 'holding onto your roots' applies upward pressure & promotes cultural change.

Thanks for listening & taking the time to consider how to look after yourself better.

I hope this has been useful, even if only a little





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