THE ONGOING JOURNEY OF POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Emotional and Organization Support- week 9
What is posttraumatic growth?

A “positive psychological change experienced as a result of a struggle with highly challenging life circumstances” and through establishing perspectives for a “new normal” when the old normal is no longer an option.

Qualities include:

- Deliberate reflection – how have we been impacted?
- Learning – what have we learned?
- Growth – reimagining a new normal, a different status quo

Emphasis on restoring function but more importantly achieving a higher level of functioning

“Posttraumatic growth does not minimize the seriousness and severity of what has happened but can emerge from adversity through active management following the important process of grieving.”

Who do I want to be during COVID-19?
Two strategies to support *individual* growth

- Calm, safe place resource
- Personal safety plan
Calm, safe place

A resource to help ground (balance, calm) an individual when feeling anxious, stressed, angry, fearful, etc.

Identify a calm, safe place:

• Where do you have fun?
• Where do you go to relax?

When you think of this place, what comes to mind?

• What is your strongest memory of it?
• What images, sounds, emotions, and smells accompany it?
• Where do you notice these sensations in your body?
Close your eyes and feel those positive feelings, and let a *simple word* come to your mind that can help remind you of this place.

We do not need to be a therapist to be therapeutic.
Personal safety plan

The personal safety plan is a strategy to manage stress/distress in the moment.

When beginning to feel overwhelmed ("catching" the stress response), intentionally engage your safety plan to feel more charge of yourself and how you want to react in the situation.

What are three things that you can do to help you self-regulate, to regain balance, and to increase a sense of calm and agency?

We have choice!
Grounding is a key principle of trauma-informed care.

Grounding is a coping strategy to connect us with the present moment.
Grounding ideas to include on your safety plan

- Rapid bursts of movement like jumping jacks or running stairs to discharge stress and quieten the body/mind
- Gentle movement like wiggling in your chair and tapping your feet on the floor to reconnect with the present moment
- Hold an ice cube in your hand and watch it melt
- Breath work (box breathing, 4-7-8 technique, etc.), elicit a yawn!
- Laughter, jokes, silliness, fun!
- Music (releases flushes of dopamine, a happiness-inducing chemical)
- Mantras like “A hard moment does not mean a hard rest of the day”
- Compassionate self-talk
Personal safety plan

The plan is different for each person. May have a work plan and a home plan.

- What do you enjoy doing to relax and recenter?
- *Ideas to come…*

Share the safety plans at work (with team members), help support each other.

- *Normalize* using strategies that support wellbeing
- Some staff may not feel comfortable sharing

Make the plans visible and accessible

- Laminate cards, attach to back of ID badge, paste on clipboard, attach to car dashboard

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My Personal Safety Plan

If I am feeling overwhelmed, I will:

1. Exhale deeply and inhale, elicit a yawn
2. Soften the muscle in my face and belly
3. Get up and move around, go outside if possible
4. Hold my dog

*My Mantra: May there be joy in this moment!*

Sanctuary Model
Sample ID Badge with Safety Plan

Front

My Personal Safety Plan

When I am feeling overwhelmed, I will:
1. 3-2-1 GROUNDING
2. 4-7-8 BREATHING
3. DANCING GIRAFFE

Back
Supporting Staff Wellbeing
Gratitude and Recognition
Gratitude practices, two ideas

1. Send a letter to staff member’s family thanking them for sharing their special person at work. If possible, enclose a gift card for something that the family can do together.

2. Create an “Employee Care Plan” and identify the person’s strengths, what gets them excited about work, routines that are important to them, how they prefer to be recognized, and fun things like their favorite soda and candy.

Ideas courtesy of Jeff Barrett, RN, MHA, NHA
Is there a difference between recognition and appreciation?

*Appreciation* is a pizza party.
- Everyone is included.
- Pizza parties are good! Yummy, too.

*Recognition* is identifying specific actions of one person or a group of people.
- Individualized to the situation
Saying “thank you” in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Language

- NVC distinguishes three components in the expression of appreciation:
  1. The actions that have contributed to our well-being
  2. The particular needs of ours that have been fulfilled
  3. The pleasureful feelings engendered by the fulfillment of those needs

This is what you did; this is what I feel; this is the need of mine that was met.

Recognition Stories

- A well-written recognition story connects employees to the business with three components.
  1. Action – describe what they did
  2. Focus – relate this event to a company value
  3. Impact – describe the result, potential savings or other impact

“Increasing Employee Engagement Through Strategic Recognition” by Josh Bersin
Pictures used with permission from Abu and Melissa
What recognition could someone give you that would have you jumping for joy?!
Building a Culture of Emotional Safety and Trust to Support Staff Wellbeing

How Active (Attuned) Listening and Learning Support Growth and Wellbeing
Foster a Culture of Attuned Listening and Learning to Build Trust

- What are processes for staff to share feelings and build trust?
  - Employee Rounds
  - Employee Huddles
  - Debriefs
  - Pulse Surveys
  - Town Halls

ASK “What Matters...Now?”
LISTEN to “What Matters...Now.”
DO “What Matters...Now.”
### Questions to Ask to Support Post Traumatic Growth

**eTable. Questions to Explore Domains of Posttraumatic Growth at the Individual and Organizational Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of posttraumatic growth</th>
<th>Development of deeper relationships</th>
<th>Openness to new possibilities</th>
<th>Greater sense of strength</th>
<th>Stronger sense of spirituality</th>
<th>Greater appreciation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td>Who has experience surviving such a trauma? Are there people whom I trust to share this experience and gain perspective in reframing the experience?</td>
<td>While I cannot change what has happened, what can I learn from this experience? How can this experience better prepare me for future stress and trauma? How can I transform tragedy into triumph?</td>
<td>Because I survived this experience, am I stronger than I thought? Are there role models who have grown stronger under conditions of extreme adversity and suffering?</td>
<td>Is this experience bigger than myself? What brings meaning to my life? What are my true values? Are my choices aligned with my values?</td>
<td>Will this be a wake-up call for me and push me to reorder priorities in my life?</td>
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<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>What can we learn from other organizations that have survived similar traumas? Does our community feel they can trust and rely on us during crisis? Do we engage our community in open, honest 2-way communication?</td>
<td>Where have inertia and tradition prevented us from considering new ways of delivering care to better serve our patients? Can this disruption propel our innovation and improvement?</td>
<td>What strength did our organization display in surviving this trauma? How can we leverage this quality to bring about necessary change in other areas?</td>
<td>What are our true mission, vision, and values? Are we authentically serving our community and patients?</td>
<td>Are we taking care of the well-being of the people of our organization to the extent we should?</td>
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Questions for Leaders to Support Post Traumatic Growth

- Development of deeper relationships
  - What can we learn from other organizations that have survived similar traumas? Does our community feel they can trust and rely on us during crisis? Do we engage our community in open, honest 2-way communication?

- Openness to new possibilities
  - Where have inertia and tradition prevented us from considering new ways of delivering care to better serve our patients? Can this disruption propel our innovation and improvement?

- Greater sense of strength
  - What strength did our organization display in surviving this trauma? How can we leverage this quality to bring about necessary change in other areas?

- Stronger sense of spirituality
  - What are our true mission, vision, and values? Are we authentically serving our community and patients?

- Greater appreciation
  - Are we taking care of the well-being of the people of our organization to the extent we should?

How do we Recover and Grow...Together

Focus on **personal stories** from residents/families and point of care and operational staff that reinforce **shared** purpose

Create a **learning culture: Ask. Listen. Do** in every day activities. Incorporate learning and do what staff, residents, and families say matters most

- Culture change and behavior change takes time!

Support a **culture of staff growth**, wellbeing, and development of point of care “champions”

- How might you use buddy systems in processes?

Tap into **creativity of staff** and enhance teamwork/communication through incorporating improvement activities, tools, and training into everyday processes

Promote **joy and celebration at work** and healthy relationships between staff and residents/families through direct observation, building empathy, and re-imagining the “new normal” together
### Types of Questions to Bring About Conversation:

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<th>Goal</th>
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<td>Q: What is meaningful in your daily work?</td>
<td>• Goal: Reinforce shared purpose</td>
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<td>Q: What are the pebbles in your shoes? (What could be improved?)</td>
<td>• Follow up Question: How would you improve it/them?</td>
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<td>• Goal: Acknowledge human fallibility, ideas for improvement, how to bring about change</td>
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<td>• Personal agency, share individual voices, get curious about the process</td>
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<td>Q: How do you feel recognized at work?</td>
<td>• Goal: Understand feelings and needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q: Who do you want to thank and why? How would you like to recognize them?</td>
<td>• Goal: Meet the need for recognition and contribution</td>
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**Improvement Tool(s):** How to: Institute for Healthcare Improvement Conversation and Action Guide

**LISTEN to “What Matters...Now.”**
Celebration Question:

- What has been your greatest accomplishment in the last 6 months?
Additional Resources

- Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic  
  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764380
- Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals,  
  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2771807
- Stress First Aid Toolkit for Long-Term Care Staff,  
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