

Preventing Provider Burnout

Part Two in A Three-Part Self Care Series for Early Childhood Educators

Presented by Lenore Rubin, PhD., Child Psychologist with the Seattle Public Health Department and the West Seattle Preschool Association.

August 8th, 2011

Recap:

It is important to distinguish between burnout and stress.

Burnout: emotions are stunted, feelings of detachment, hopelessness, depression, “every day is a bad day”, diminished feelings of personal accomplishment.

Stress: Emotionally over-reactive, hyper-emotional, anxious.

You don't treat both the same.

Usually higher levels of stress are found in people whose jobs provide a large amount of responsibility combined with only a small amount of control/power.

Our responses to stress are different depending on our individual defense mechanisms. These include such defenses as sense of humor, the ability to understand things in context, rationalization, alcohol and/or drugs (which blunt strong feelings).

Lenore referenced Adverse Life Events studies at Kaizer Permanente. People with higher number of adverse life events are more likely to have or develop heart disease, diabetes, cancer, drug/alcohol addictions. Stress changes the brain, and it becomes more likely to be stressed and unhealthy.

Here are two articles I googled for reference:

- http://www.sexhelpworkshops.com/Documents/ARTICLE_DevelopmentalStressExposureAndSubsequentRiskForSubstanceAbuse.pdf
- <http://www.annafoundation.org/ACE%20folder%20for%20website/55%20Child%20abuse%20and%20Psychosis.pdf>

Happiness: People who say they are happy, the top 2 factors for them are affiliations (friends, family, peers, etc.) and self-worth (there is value in what you do and in who you are). It's also not about materialism: health and safety are a top priority. It's also important to value yourself enough, and to have self-knowledge.

What can you do? “Quiet a busy mind”

- Meditation (very valuable, difficult)
- Pleasure zone (read a book, call a friend, bubble bath)
- Yoga
- Friends
- Exercise (5 days a week, 30 minutes a day)
- Healthy diet
- Technology break (the last hour before bed)
- Try cutting out caffeine, sugar, alcohol.
- Get more sleep.

- Learn how to say “no”, don’t do so much.
- Don’t try to control what you can’t.
- Spend 5-10 min. every day doing something you enjoy.
- Make little plans for yourself.
- Reduce daily annoyances; they add up. Fix an annoying problem.
- Divide your “to do” list into three categories, things I **must**, **should**, and **may** do.
- Adjust your standards. Most of us aren’t Martha Stewart.
- From Cognitive Behaviorists:
 - Don’t allow yourself negative self-talk.
 - Challenge the evidence for what you think is true.
 - Get rid of words such as “always”, “never” and “should”.
 - If you avoid/don’t do something because “something bad might happen”, practice what you’d do in the “what if” scenario. It’s not as terrible as you’d think.
 - Reframe your standards, such as how you define “clean” or “exercise”, or rules you set for yourself.
 - Make lemonade out of lemons.
- We want to build resilience, in ourselves and in the children.
- Ask for help, find some support.
- We want to listen to and value our feelings, and the children’s feelings, and then come up with a solution to the problem.
- Recognize what it is.
- Reverse it if you can.
- Be Resilient whatever happens.
- Kids get stressed, too. They show it in many of the same ways that we do.

There is such a thing as secondary trauma, experienced by those who hear a lot of other people’s troubles, they begin to feel the symptoms of trauma themselves.

Renee referred to a technique called reflection relationship. In it, the person you are relating to are reflected in a mirror, and you make a conscious decision to switch the reflection, to mirror back to the person what you wish to see and bring about in the other person. The way you react to the person that you are having a conflict with will change. Here is an article about the idea: look up online, from someone like Deepak chopra or tony robbins. <http://mihaelaotp.hubpages.com/hub/The-Mirror-Relationship-Love-is-a-reflection-mirror-principle-in-psychology>

Two books we like:

1. Happy for the Rest of Your Life: Four Steps to Contentment, Hope, and Joy--and the Three Keys to Staying There by Gregory L. Jantz
2. How Be Happy Without Being Perfect: How to Worry Less and Enjoy Life More by Alice D. Domar Ph.D.

Contacts:

Lenore Rubin Lenore.Rubin@kingcounty.gov

Lenore would like to hear from you! Please email her your ideas for future discussions, questions, and scenarios.

Ideas: Mid-school year meeting for exchanging curriculum/classroom/activity ideas, topics and resources.

Next Meeting:

Handling Difficult Communication with Parents- 1 Stars Credit

Monday August 15th ◦ 8:00-9:00 pm

Endolyne Joe's ◦ *near the Fauntleroy ferry* ◦ West Seattle

It's not always easy to talk to parents about their children's challenging or concerning behaviors. As educators, we may second-guess ourselves or doubt our own judgment about a child's development. We might not know what to say, how to say it, or where to turn for help after we do say it. Learn about community resources, new tips on maintaining professionalism, and sharpening your communication skills.

And coming up:

- September 19, 2011
- October 17, 2011
- November 21, 2011
- No meeting in December