

**STUDY GUIDE:  
SELF-CARE FOR TITLE IX  
COORDINATORS**

**20-Minutes-to...**  
***Trained***

**PRESENTED BY:**

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## **20-Minutes-to...*Trained*: Self-Care for Title IX Coordinators Learning Outcomes**

- Participants will understand the concepts of burnout and self-care and how they relate to work in Title IX.
- Participants will be able to recognize the symptoms of burnout in themselves and in those working with/around them.
- Participants will learn how to respond to burnout, how to take care of themselves, and how to build safeguards into their work to avoid burnout.
- Participants will understand how modeling self-care for coworkers and supervisees is a best practice and helps create a more positive, productive work environment.



## **20-Minutes-to...*Trained*: Self-Care for Title IX Coordinators Discussion Questions**

- What does burnout look like in your work life? Have you experienced it before? How did you deal with it?
- Have you observed others in burnout? What warning signs did you observe leading up to it? What inherent job conditions do you think make burnout more likely?
- Have you worked with anyone who practices good self-care? How does their approach to work differ from the stereotypical employee?
- How does Title IX work make a person more prone to burnout? What are the elements of your particular job that make you more prone to burnout?
- What self-care practices do you currently use? What practices could you introduce to address potential sources of burnout?



## **20-Minutes-to...*Trained*: Self-Care for Title IX Coordinators Case Studies**

### **Alan**

Alan is the Title IX Coordinator at Llama State University. His position is part of the Student Affairs office and Alan is also responsible for oversight of Greek Life and the Center for Student Involvement. Alan works 10-hour days most of the time. His administrative assistance, Joyce, took the part time job in Alan's office after retirement to fund the spoiling of her grandchildren. Alan says she is a lifesaver. She is always available when Alan needs her, day or night. Alan will often fire off a quick email or send a text at any hour when he remembers something to be addressed the next day. As the Title IX Coordinator at a small institution, Alan is pretty much on-call 24/7 anyway, and Joyce is often right there helping him keep everything together.

In addition to Joyce, Alan manages 1 full-time investigator and 5 CSI staff. Everyone is very dedicated and works very hard. Much of the work is confidential or private, so they are a very tight-knit group and hold each other to high standards. Alan was recently approved for funding for a part-time Greek Life. He is coming to you, the head of Human Resources, to craft the job description for the position and get advice about how to best manage his staff resources. You see an opportunity to talk more globally about Alan and his team.



## **20-Minutes-to...*Trained*: Self-Care for Title IX Coordinators Case Studies Question & Answer**

**Ivan and Juanita**

For Discussion:

- Is Alan showing warning signs of potential burnout?
  - There are potential catalysts to burnout?
    - Many direct responsibilities in diverse areas.
    - Consistently working 10-hour days.
    - No work/life boundaries (emails, calls at night).
    - 24/7 availability as Title IX Coordinator.
    - Expecting staff to be always available.
- If so, how might Alan's work style push his staff to burnout?
  - Staff will feel pressure to produce at the same level, despite different stages of life, other commitments outside of work.
  - Joyce is expected to be available all the time and is actively involved in grandkids' life.
  - Staff will put pressure on one another to work beyond normal work/life boundaries.
- What sort of questions might you want to ask Alan about his work life experience to discover additional warning signs?
  - Has he taken a vacation recently?
  - Does he feel like he can truly step away from work when he goes home?
  - How often is he taking phone calls after work hours?
  - How often is he communicating with staff after hours?
  - What does he like to do with his free time?
  - How does his staff respond to his work style?
  - Does Joyce have "off" time?
- Do you have any concerns about the culture in Alan's office?
  - Undue pressure to violate work/life boundaries.
  - Blackballing staff that set firm limits on work time or are unavailable after normal work hours.

- Do staff take above average amounts of sick time?
  - Do staff take regular time off for vacation?
  - Is there high turnover in the office?
- What should Alan consider before he brings another employee into the office?
  - Whether the pace Alan sets as the leader is sustainable for himself.
  - Whether the pace is sustainable for staff.
  - Does the culture tolerate bullying or “hazing?”
  - Will the pace of work burn new employees out quickly?

# TITLE

# IX TODAY

Helping colleges, universities  
& schools ensure gender equity

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## ABOUT US

The NCHERM Group, LLC., a law and consulting firm offering systems-levels solutions to create safer campuses, and the Association of Title IX Administrators, which provides networking and professional development for Title IX Coordinators, publish *Title IX Today*, its companion website, [www.TitleIX.Today](http://www.TitleIX.Today), and subscriber e-newsletter.

## THE LEAD | SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### Ease into Title IX work: advice for new professionals

By Cynthia Gomez, Editor

While it's no secret that Title IX work is often difficult in many ways, being newly thrust into a Title IX position — whether it's as Investigator, Deputy Coordinator, or Coordinator — can be downright terrifying. Individuals who are new to this work may feel unprepared, confused as to what is required of them, or fearful that an honest misstep may get them sued or investigated by the Office for Civil Rights. Plus, new professionals may feel unsupported in their Title IX role, and may not have others at their institutions who understand what they are experiencing.

Jyl Shaffer, the Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator at Montana State University, knows those feelings well. She spoke at the recent ATIXA/SCOPE Joint National Conference in Philadelphia about the experience of landing in a new Title IX role, and shared strategies for both new Title IX professionals and those who mentor them. Following are some of her key recommendations:

**1. Know that OCR complaints and lawsuits come with the territory, and seem scarier than they truly are.** It's a matter of when, not if, they will occur, because there is usually one party in any given situation that is unsatisfied with the outcome, Shaffer noted. She's learned to view OCR

inquiries like tax audits — something that's bound to happen at some point that, no matter how meticulous she is, will always uncover issues of concern. "It just becomes part of the job," she said of dealing with lawsuits and OCR investigations.

**2. Know your learning style so you can quickly get up to speed.**

There are many free online tests that help determine how you learn best if you don't already know this, Shaffer noted. For some individuals, going through old case files can be very helpful, particularly in terms of getting accustomed to the kinds of stories and language you'll be hearing. Meanwhile, others — herself included — may prefer to learn by jumping right in and doing the work, even if it takes a bit to get things right. Shadowing a Title IX professional from a nearby institution may be a great solution as well. Shaffer also always recommends ATIXA trainings.

**3. Practice the tasks involved in performing your job.** To reduce the likelihood of both OCR complaints and legal actions, she recommends practicing your job, with student-advocates playing the role of reporting parties. "We rarely get feedback from people involved in our process, and that's reasonable, so we have to find other ways of learning how we're doing." Plus, those new to Title IX work may be initially

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## FROM THE FIELD | LIABILITY

## Understand private cause of action with regard to Campus SaVE

By Anna Oppenheim, J.D.

In federal litigation, private parties must have suffered a violation of their rights and must also have a constitutional or statutory *right of action* to pursue their claim(s) in court. In the 1979 case of *Cannon v. University of Chicago*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Title IX provides individuals with that right.

The Clery Act requires institutions of higher education that participate in federal financial aid programs to maintain and disclose information about crime on and near their campuses. Clery prohibits a private right of action for violations of its provisions. In 2013, when portions of the Campus SaVE Act, or Section 304 of the reauthorized Violence Against Women Act, amended certain sections of Clery, it was not known what effect these amendments would have on Clery's prohibition of a private cause of action. The Campus SaVE Act amends only certain paragraphs within Clery; it does *not* modify paragraph 14, which prohibits a cause of action "against any institution of higher education or any employee of such an institution for any civil liability."

The courts have held that there is no statutory private right of action under

Clery. Further, Clery's provisions articulate: "[E]vidence regarding compliance or noncompliance with [Clery] shall not be admissible as evidence in any proceeding of any court, agency, board, or other entity, except with respect to an action to enforce [the act]." This provision is unchanged by Campus SaVE. In short, private causes of action are still expressly prohibited.

The Clery Act also specifies that its requirements do not establish any standard of care. So, a court will not recognize a violation of Clery as negligence per se (i.e., a violation of the Clery Act is not proof in and of itself of negligence), which affects litigants' ability to bring a suit related to a Clery violation under a common law negligence cause of action. Relevant case law is sparse, but Campus SaVE does not seem to have an effect on this aspect of the Clery Act either.

Also of note is the Hold Accountable and Lend Transparency (HALT) Campus Sexual Violence Act, currently pending before Congress, which creates a private right of action under Section 485(f)(14) of the Higher Education Act for students when institutions fail to meet campus safety requirements. For more information about the HALT Act, see the ATIXA Member Library. ♦

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uncomfortable listening to private or embarrassing descriptions and details, and may have trouble asking difficult questions. Role-playing can help people feel more comfortable in these situations.

**4. Do your very best given your circumstances.** Sometimes, institutions simply aren't ready to do what they must to reach full Title IX compliance, regardless of the Title IX Coordinator's best efforts. As long as you can show OCR and the courts that you did the best you could, you will be OK personally, even if your institution is not. If your institution is found to be in non-compliance, you should be able to show that you did everything within your power to bring it into compliance.

**5. Recognize and manage your biases.** Everyone has personal biases, whether conscious or subconscious, which can impact who you believe or don't believe or how you treat the parties in a Title IX complaint. However, recognizing personal biases from the start allows you to neutralize them before they can impact a case. If your role involves writing investigation reports, include the rationale for your decisions to avoid bias, whether perceived or real.

**6. Figure out what you're good at, and don't be afraid to let people know.** Title IX professionals are constantly being second-guessed and undervalued. Most of the time when you hear about what you did or didn't do, it's in a negative context. Your desk will likely never be clear, and there will always be things you can't get to immediately. Reflect on what you're doing well so you can remind others, but also so that you can remind yourself. "If you don't know how to find the good on those days when it feels like there's nothing good in the day, you're going to burn out," she said.

**7. Cherish those scarce pats on the back.** Rarely will parties in Title IX complaints thank you or tell you what a difference you made in their lives. When your job is done, they walk away and hopefully don't come back. When you receive a thank-you note or a token of appreciation, keep it near and let it sustain you during the bad days.

**8. Keep your goals in mind.** On the days when quitting sounds like a good idea, think about how this role fits into your career goals. Maybe it doesn't, and you just ended up in a Title IX position because someone in the administration picked you for the role. If that's the case, think about how what you're doing fits into your personal mission and values, and look for opportunities to build cross-disciplinary skills.

**9. Have a sense of humor.** It can be difficult for Title IX staff to develop friendships with colleagues. When people see you, their defenses may immediately go up. They may wonder if they are under investigation or feel like they can never speak freely around you. When people come to talk to you, they are often in a difficult emotional state. Being able to maintain a sense of humor can help lighten your own and others' mood.

**10. Set healthy boundaries.** Between the emotionally draining nature of Title IX work and the potentially long hours, it can be easy to feel burned out. But the field needs you and the students your office serves need you, so it is essential that you take proper care of yourself, whether that means not bringing work home with you on weekends, getting out of your office to eat lunch, or finding a network of other Title IX professionals with whom you can commiserate.

For more information, contact Jyl Shaffer at [jylshaffer@gmail.com](mailto:jylshaffer@gmail.com). ♦



JYL SHAFFER

Jyl Shaffer is the Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator at Montana State University.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

» Title IX work can seem frightening and overwhelming to those who are new to it, but making key connections and pursuing professional development opportunities can help.

» Making an earnest effort to do your best in light of the circumstances may help you steer clear of OCR reprimand, as well as personal liability.

» Maintain a sense of humor and cherish those rare pats on the back to help you get through the tougher days.

» Understand the biases you bring to the table to prevent them from affecting your decisions.

» To avoid burnout, practice self-care, including setting healthy boundaries related to your work. ♦

## COMPLIANCE CORNER | INVESTIGATIONS

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Nedda Black, J.D., LMSW** is an attorney in California whose practice focuses almost exclusively on higher education, with particular emphasis on Title IX, including compliance and investigations. She is also an Associate Attorney with The NCHERM Group.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Don't expect reporting parties to display specific behaviors that you believe to be consistent with sexual trauma, because trauma can impact different people differently.
- » Reporting parties may self-censor or present a certain way as the result of their education, training, and personal experiences.
- » The cultural and religious beliefs or customs of your interviewees may impact what they tell you and how they say it.
- » Just as you may be sizing up interviewees, your interviewees are sizing you up, and what they observe about you may affect their statements to you.
- » Past trauma may result in disproportionate responses to stimuli, so don't assume that intense responses from reporting parties represent recent trauma. ♦

## Trauma-informed interviewing is more than what you say or how

*By Nedda Black, J.D., Contributing Editor*

The roundtable discussion on trauma-informed interviewing at the recent annual ATIXA/SCOPE Joint National Conference was a fruitful one. Here, I'd like to share with our readers some highlights from that discussion, and also add some other points into which we did not have time to delve.

### Avoid logical fallacies in trauma-informed approach

One of the most well known precepts to trauma-informed interviewing is to not expect reporting parties to communicate their experiences with perfect linear consistency. Expecting consistency from reporting parties places a burden on them that may not be realistic in the wake of trauma. However, be careful about assuming the opposite — that consistency is incompatible with trauma. Trauma may lead someone to be hyper-aroused or hyper-vigilant, but the lack of these qualities does not suggest the absence of trauma. To avoid these pitfalls in analytical reasoning, keep in mind that reporting parties were not blank canvases on which a particular series of events made their mark. They are complex human beings who bring into the interview a wide range of experiences that influence not only their responses to those events, but also their presentation and statements to you.

### Education, training, experience can impact presentation

As a result of their particular education, training, and experience, certain individuals may be more attuned to inconsistencies in their own statements and may be actively listening

for whether their narrative “makes sense.” You may observe these individuals making a running commentary about their own statements (e.g., “I know I said I was on birth control, but I really did ask him to put on a condom.”). They may attempt to see and hear themselves through your eyes, anticipating your critique and letting you know that they are aware of all the inconsistencies in their stories. When you encounter this, consider what you know about the individual. Graduate students, for example, tend to do this more than undergraduates. Among graduate students, law students tend to place the highest burden on themselves to provide an internally consistent, linear narrative. Medical students, who are trained in taking comprehensive patient histories, are also quite familiar with the nature of red flags, and may self-censor their statements to avoid raising such flags. Those who have been through the conduct process before (or through the juvenile justice or other justice system) also tend to listen to their own testimony with a third ear, and may, as a result, censor information that they believe may be perceived as compromising their credibility.

The education, training, and experience of parties or witnesses may not only impact the consistency of their testimony, but it might also have a significant impact on their emotional presentation during interviews. Law students, for example, are taught that justice is fact-driven, not emotion-driven. This can result in a strong impulse to suppress emotion and to sound more “rational” in their statements. Be careful about assuming that their



hyper-rationality undermines their credibility. It may or may not.

### **Consider cultural, religious beliefs and customs**

Not much time is spent focusing on how culture and religion may influence reporting parties, but the reality is that these influences can sometimes be substantial. For example, I once interviewed a female student whose parents had emigrated from India. She provided a highly sterilized (and very compelling) testimony that made her appear to be an entirely asexual human being. While there is nothing inherently wrong with that, if it is true, testimony from others suggested that was not the case. Her father was her support person, and I learned when I uttered the word “vagina” why his daughter provided the testimony that she did. Her father very sternly instructed me not to utter that word again. He also informed me that his daughter was not allowed to even “think about boys” until she graduated from college, and that he knew that she was honoring this promise. While in this example, her father was in the room with her, even if an interviewee’s parents are not in the room, their teachings might be, as might be any number of cultural or religious beliefs and customs that play an integral part of that individual’s consciousness.

Also, keep in mind that a party may believe that the consequence of violating those beliefs and customs is far greater than any consequence that might arise from providing less-than-forthright statements in a Title IX investigation. Going against one’s cultural or religious teachings can result in excommunication from the communities that form an individual’s sense of identity and belonging. Be careful to never underestimate the power those

influences can have on an individual, and never presume to know exactly how that influence may (or may not) be playing out before you.

### **Perception of the interviewer can affect the interview**

Another issue that is not discussed as much as it should be is the effect that our own presence might be having on a reporting party’s statements. No matter how open-minded, objective, attentive, and empathic we believe we are, the reality is that our interviewees are constantly sizing us up and drawing conclusions about who we are, what we are capable of understanding, and whether or not we are equipped to do our jobs. Just as we are constantly sizing them up, they are doing the same to us. They may draw conclusions based upon our race, sex, gender-identity, religion (to the degree it is known), socioeconomic class (at least, as it appears based on our presentation and on the information available to them), and on myriad other verbal and non-verbal clues they may observe. What those observations stir up in our interviewees can have a profound impact on their statements. And, the bigger the elephant in the room, the more insidious the impact can be.

For example, consider a civil rights investigation involving hate speech between Palestinian and Israeli students and an Investigator who is Jewish or Middle Eastern. That fact need not, *per se*, disqualify the Investigator. However, the interviewees may well be factoring it into their calculations, whether they articulate this or not, so ignoring it as an influential force may prove detrimental to the investigation. Similarly, when race discrimination or racial tension is at issue in a case, I never leave my own race an

unspoken fact. In my experience, I have found that it is always better to own it and to give the interviewees permission to comment freely upon what they believe I will or will not understand as a result of my own racial identity.

These are only a couple of examples. As a matter of practice, we would all be wise to constantly be on alert for the many ways in which our own presentation may be impacting the statements we receive. Remember that an interview involves an *interaction* between at least *two* people. The Investigator is not merely a blank receptacle for information.

### **Account for the effect of past trauma on responses**

Past trauma is a substantial topic in its own right (as are all the other issues raised above). But, for the purposes of this article, I suggest that everyone keep in mind that while it is not our responsibility or business as Investigators to delve into the past trauma of those whom we interview, the potential of trauma to influence interviewees’ statements is very real. Past trauma can leave people with enduring hyper-sensitivity, hyper-vigilance, and hyper-arousal, such that relatively slight stimuli can cause a strong reaction. Remain aware of this potential (without calling it out), and constantly assess for the proportionality of responses in light of the facts as they are presented to you.

If you are questioning the proportionality of responses, have interviewees provide more factual details so that you can get a full, clear picture of the situation and their reaction. Doing this before you rush to judgment will assist you in making a sound assessment as to whether their responses were within the range of what is appropriate for their situation. ♦



CHRISTINE PAUL

Christine Paul serves as the Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct at California Lutheran University.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

» Leveraging the buy-in, trust, and help of others for your Title IX programs and services is essential, because the Title IX Coordinator, especially if in a dual role, cannot do it all alone.

» Having a stakeholder or working group to help with the Title IX office's vision and initiatives can help spread the workload, and cultivate relationships across the campus.

» Watch out for potential conflicts of interest related to dual roles of the Coordinator, Investigators, and Advocates.

» Use your housing partners, including Resident Assistants, to extend your educational reach to students. ♦

## PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE | POLICIES & PROCEDURES

# Serving in a dual role can be challenging, but partnerships help

By Amy Murphy, Ph.D., Contributing Editor

**C**hristine Paul, the Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct at California Lutheran University, recently shared some valuable insights based on her research of Title IX Coordinator skills and competencies, as well as the challenges associated with serving as a Title IX Coordinator in a dual role.

**Q What backgrounds or skills do you see as being important for Title IX Coordinators?**

**A** After the “Dear Colleague Letter” of 2011, institutions were scrambling. Due to limited resources, many employees inherited their Title IX Coordinator roles after being at their institutions for quite some time. Those appointed often already had political capital with the upper administration, were highly trusted by their supervisors, and in many cases, already reported directly to the President or Provost. Title IX Coordinators need to be able to leverage the help of others and build buy-in for programs and services. The ability to bring people together around a common goal and to develop rapport and trust with stakeholders is a critical skill, because you cannot do it all alone. Title IX Coordinators must be able to understand and analyze the law, policy, and compliance issues, while using resources conservatively.

**Q What are some of the challenges related to implementing Title IX at smaller institutions?**

**A** While smaller institutions often have fewer reported cases, the expectations in terms of what is required of them is the same as for larger institutions. The policies, programs, infrastructure, educational initiatives, and services still have to be in place,

and those things take a significant amount of time and resources. It's also common to wear many different hats at a small school, but in Title IX Coordinator positions, the role conflation is exceptionally difficult and can cause you to lose sight of the bigger picture.

**Q What strategies do TIX Coordinators in dual positions use?**

**A** Title IX Coordinators who have dual roles must be able to handle each role well. Failing to invest in the position's success could end up costing the institution time, money, and negative public relations. The creation of a stakeholder or working group is a common practice. These groups focus on everything from prevention to response. Many groups involve student life and activities staff, campus safety, human resources, residence life, and conduct officers. At our institution, our stakeholder group does not talk about specific cases; rather, we focus on the vision and overall coordination of Title IX processes and programs. This is a way to share the responsibilities of Title IX across the institution and provide a forum for communicating about related issues.

Title IX Coordinators in dual roles appear to do better if they have others investigating cases, instead of also playing the role of Investigator. Trying to do both may create conflicts of interest and self-care challenges. Also, some Title IX Coordinators do not have experience working with difficult and emotional topics and interactions, so the ability to rely on others to investigate helps.

**Q What conflicts of interest exist for TIX staff in dual roles?**

**A** It is common to have responsibilities in student conduct and/

or residence life while also serving as a Title IX Investigator. There can be conflicts related to previous interactions with students, so the Title IX Coordinator assigning the cases needs to be attentive to this. The crossover between student conduct and Title IX processes when an institution uses two distinct processes can also create difficulty for staff and confusion for students. Like many schools, we also do not have a dedicated Advocate role. When an Advocate is in a dual role, it's important to pay attention to potential conflicts that may arise in the provision of support, resources, and assistance.

### **Q What Title IX-related trends are you noticing on campus?**

**A** As on many campuses, we continue to see the need for improved consent education, particularly related to scenarios involving alcohol and incapacity. Also, the shift from a culture of "no means no" to an affirmative consent standard of "yes means yes" requires increased education and resources. We have invested in training related to the duties of responsible employees and mandatory reporters, so reporting has increased. In addition, we must continue to consider the effectiveness of our educational programming and pair strong assessment activities with these initiatives. We should also recognize that students and parents are becoming educated consumers about Title IX-related issues and are asking about these issues when touring campuses or attending orientation. So, we cannot forget to educate those working with prospective students to ensure they are providing accurate information.

### **Q Is there a program or best practice you would like to share?**

**A** While resources can sometimes feel rather limited, my institution deploys them well. We are happy with the team approach

of our stakeholder group. These are staff members from across the institution who volunteer their time. Further, we use Resident Assistants to help with Title IX education. All of them are required to hold a program for their students at some point during the year. Many were already doing programming on related topics, such as safe sex and healthy relationships, so we just asked them to add Title IX-related content to their programs.

### **Q How do you train RAs on what to do when someone reports?**

**A** For RAs, we focus on the basics, as we do not want to overwhelm them with details of the process that they may confuse or forget. We let them know it can be helpful to tell their residents in advance that they are required to report sexual assault and similar types of concerns so that the residents can decide if they want to disclose information. Then, we help RAs to understand what to report and to whom. Our Graduate Resident Directors are provided with additional details on Title IX processes.

### **Q How can TIX Coordinators work better with housing?**

**A** Housing and residence life employees are the front-line recipients of complaints of all kinds. Everyone comes to them, so they are often viewed as the ones always reporting concerns and issues and sharing tough feedback with other departments. This can make it difficult to build relationships across campus. Title IX Coordinators should look beyond the perception that housing staff are the complainers and understand that they are just the receivers of many complaints. Involve housing staff in the work of the Title IX office to increase collaboration, and consider including them in stakeholder groups or student conduct-related meetings. ♦

### **About the Author**

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## Communicate your message more effectively: 5 tips



LISA CANIA

**L**isa Cania served higher education for close to 30 years as Chief Public Relations Officer before transitioning to human resources and

Title IX, among other duties, seven years ago. She used her prior career experience to develop the awareness programs used today at St. Lawrence University. Below, she offers five tips for achieving effective communications in training.

**1. Show, don't tell.** Show your audience what you want them to know, rather than just telling them. Using specific examples and anecdotes will lead to greater understanding and information

retention. Make cultural references that students see as authentic. We constantly update our materials for relevance.

**2. Use multiple channels.** People need at least seven repetitions to recall a fact. We usually don't have seven distinct opportunities to repeat the same information, but we do have multiple channels to use. Offering information via training in person and online, as well as through booklets, posters, stall stickers, social media, workshops, and theatre allows individuals to access information in the methods they prefer and at the time when they can focus.

**3. Tailor your content to your audience.** Addressing the needs of first-year students, who have little context in which to understand collegiate culture, should be done differently

than addressing seniors. If we think about each audience and how members may interact with the information, we have a better chance of connecting with people in a meaningful way.

**4. Maintain a conversational tone.** Whether writing or speaking, using a conversational tone of voice will improve understanding. Avoid the jargon inherent to every discipline; use simple sentences, vivid nouns, and active verbs.

**5. Edit, then edit again.** I take strange joy in editing a text to a specific, tighter word count, while retaining meaning and voice. Editing your writing, presentation, or speech will improve its effectiveness. You may have unlimited space, but you don't have unlimited time with your audience. ♦



## Summary Sheet

### Fighting Mid-Semester Burnout and Stress

- Many staff and faculty become overwhelmed when under stress. We become less effective and struggle to meet every the bare minimum expectations
- While feeling stressed at certain times of the semester is normal (new clients, always in crisis, long day, lack of support)-- cumulative feelings of stress can lead to a larger problem: burnout

You may be stressed if you....

- have a compelling need to always check email right as it comes in
- have feelings of dread at the thought of a new day
- think about work constantly during your personal time
- fall behind in keeping up with notes, cancel appointments and avoid answering the phone
- no longer look for ways to improve your interactions with students or update your presentations
- want to just “get through” the day rather than seeing an opportunity to connect with students
- are described as sarcastic and inflexible by others
- have trouble delegating tasks

| Physical Stress Signs | Cognitive Stress Signs       |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Headaches             | Exhaustion                   |
| Teeth grinding        | Negative rumination          |
| Insomnia              | Inability to focus on a task |
| Irritability, anger   | Reduced libido               |
| Muscle tension        | Reduction in joy             |
| Gastric disturbance   | Mental fatigue               |
| High blood pressure   | Feelings of futility         |
| Rapid heartbeat       | Devaluing of co-workers      |



## **Cost of Stress & Burnout**

- Job performance decreases, Mistakes increase
- Office morale drops, Isolation from others
- Work relationships suffer, Personal life suffers
- increased risk for substance abuse
- Increased risk for problems with physical and mental health
- Decreased sense of self esteem and confidence
- High staff turn over (\$), Increase use of sick leave (\$)
- Lack of collaboration with other offices
- Decrease in creativity and connection with students (retention)

## **Stress vs. Burnout**

- Stress
  - is characterized by over engagement
  - produces a sense of urgency and hyperactivity
  - is a loss of fuel and energy
  - is where emotions become over-reactive
- Burnout
  - is characterized by disengagement
  - creates a sense of helplessness and hopelessness
  - is a loss of ideals and hope
  - is where emotions become blunted

“The law of floatation was not discovered by contemplating the sinking of things, but by contemplating the floating of things which floated naturally, and then intelligently asking why they did so.” ~ Thomas Troward

## **Positive Psychology**

- The term was coined by Martin Seligman in 1998.
- Psychology is normally focused on problems, symptoms and the weaknesses of clients.
- Treatment is centered on identifying symptoms and looking for ways improve behavior and reduce pain.
- Positive Psychology is the study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and at all stops in between.
- The study of strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive.
- What is good in life is just as genuine as what is bad.
- Takes focus away from suffering, weaknesses, problems, pathology
- [www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu) (Great survey gives happiness rating 1-5)

GREAT you tube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FBxfd7DL3E>

Wealth is only weakly related to happiness both within and across nations, particularly when income is above the poverty level (Diener & Diener, 1996).

Activities that make people happy in small doses – such as shopping, good food and making money – do not lead to fulfillment in the long term, indicating that these have quickly diminishing returns (Myers, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

People who express gratitude on a regular basis have better physical health, optimism, progress toward goals, well-being, and help others more (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000).

People who witness others perform good deeds experience an emotion called 'elevation' and this motivates them to perform their own good deeds (Haidt, 2000).

## Optimism

- Optimism is expecting good things to happen. This creates problem-solving and improved expectations about the future.
- How do we view the world?
- Explanations for events that occur during our lives
- Understand these are changeable habits, not locked in traits.

## Three Kinds of Happiness

**Happy:** Pleasant engagement (PA)---much positive emotion and skills to amplify, having as many of the pleasures as you can and having the skills to amplify them and stretch them.  
50% heritable, not very modifiable Habituates---first taste is 100%...

**Life of Engagement:** work, parenting, love, leisure, time stops for you and you are engaged in flow. Not pleasure---thought and feeling. You can't feel anything---you are one with music, time stops, intense concentration. Know what your highest strengths are---re-craft your life to use them as much as you can

**Meaning of Life:** Most venerable of all of the happiness. Knowing what your highest strengths are and using them to belong to and in the service of something larger than yourself

## Techniques to Try

- Philanthropic Activity: gratifying, not just pleasurable---spontaneous kindness, total engagement in task, paying the tolls...
- The Gratitude Letter: Write and deliver a letter to someone who hasn't been thanked
- Best Possible Selves: Imagine everything has gone well, succeeded at life goals and dreams
- Disputing Beliefs: A,B,C---dispute and effect (dispute irrational beliefs and pessimism). Argue with self, look for evidence to prove, look at all possible explanations
- 3 Good Things: Write down 3 good things that happened each day with causes. Try for a week

## Flow

- Coined by Mihály (Mike) Csíkszentmihályi (pronounced Chick-sent-me-high-ee)
- When in the "flow" we feel a sense of inner clarity, focus, concentration, outside of ordinary reality.
- "How can we live life as a work of art, rather than as a chaotic response to external events..."
- People are out of flow when we they are being conscious of a fear of who they appear to be in relation to others and what these others might think

- People are generally unhappy doing nothing.
- A life filled with flow experience is likely to be a fulfilling and happy one.

GREAT You Tube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXleFJCqsPs>

- What activities can be in flow? It can be achieved by filing papers, walking the dog, teaching a class or folding the laundry.
- These are the activities that:
  - you are able to focus on
  - that have a clear objective
  - Are a challenge, but within your abilities
  - You have the knowledge to complete
  - There is feedback on how you are doing
- Rediscover passion in life. When you are passionate about your work, it moves faster and doesn't feel like work any longer.

### **Redefining Failure**

- Understand failure as part of a journey and is essential.
- Too often, we see failure as final and a sign of weakness, rather than a lesson.
- J.K. Rowling professed at a Harvard 2008 commencement address, "It is impossible to live without failing at something".
- Be connected to those who support your positive choices, not negative ones.
- Expect failure to occur. Perfection isn't something that you should strive for.
- Assess where your energy is going on projects. Focus on those that can be successful and build from those successes.
- Narrative therapy introduces the concepts of helping students see their stories from a different perspective.
- The story doesn't change, but how they think about it is shifted.
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yetHqWODp0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yetHqWODp0) life=risk, video on failure

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnOxvbGOTbM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnOxvbGOTbM) (southwest rap)

### **Reality Therapy**

- William Glasser, founder of reality therapy, talks about the importance of creating plans and goals with a client in a manner that ensures success.
- He offers a system based on the Wants, Direction and Doing, Evaluation, Planning (WDEP).
- W = exploring the client's wants and needs. Here we are looking for the desires and direction the client want to head in. Where do they want to go? What do they want to do?
- D = direction and doing: The therapist assesses what the client is doing and the direction these behaviors are taking them.
- E = evaluation: The therapist makes an evaluation of the client's total behavior. Is the behavior taking them closer to their wants and needs?

- P = Planning and commitment: assisting clients in formulating realistic plans and making a commitment to carry them out.
- Plans should be **Simple**, **Attainable**, **Measurable**, **Immediate**, **Controlled** by the planner, **Consistently practiced**, and **Committed to**.
- **Simple**: plans are broken into small, easy pieces
- **Attainable**: plans are realistic and can be accomplished
- **Measurable**: plans can be assessed and evaluated
- **Immediate**: short term goals that occur soon
- **Controlled by the planner**: ensuring adjustments
- **Consistently practiced**: repeat until habits form
- **Committed to**: buy-in and investment
- Students plan to improve their grades – but we don't always identify the exact problem. Are they missing class, not studying for tests, studying the wrong things or not motivated to be in school?
- We can create goals that are too distant, or they are great ideas – but the client isn't on board with them. They may be too vague; difficult to determine if they are progressing or not.

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## Prochaska and DiClemente

Change Theory was introduced by Prochaska and DiClemente as an approach that outlines how people move through various stages before becoming ready to make lasting change in their lives.

**Pre-contemplation:** At this stage, the student is unaware that there is a problem and hasn't thought much about change. Staff should help the student increase their awareness of their need for change through discussion and helping the student understand how their behaviors may be impacting their life.

**Contemplation:** This is the most common stage of change for students to be in. The student has thought about change and is getting ready for movement in the near future. The student realizes their current behavior is not in their best interest, but is not yet ready to begin their plan to change. The student isn't happy about their current state and wants things to be different, but has not yet explored how to do things differently or take action to make change in their lives.

**Preparation for Action:** In this stage, the student is aware of a problem and is ready to actively create goals to address the problem behavior in their life. Plans and goals should be focused, short term and designed to be updated and altered to ensure their success. Plans should be measurable and something the student can monitor and understand if they are moving

forward, static or moving backwards. Staff should help the student brainstorm and update their plans to ensure a better chance of success.

**Action:** This stage of change is where the student puts their plans into action in order to change behavior. The student will attempt to alter their negative suicidal behavior and develop new positive behaviors to replace them. Staff should support the student in trying out these action steps and encourage them to keep trying, despite setbacks and the potential failures they may encounter.

**Maintenance and Relapse Prevention:** Here the goal is to continue successful plans and repeat those action steps that work, while adjusting things that don't. Change has occurred for the student, and there has been a reduction in problem behavior. They need to maintain their successful change and reduce the risk of falling back into bad habits. Staff should help bolster student's success and develop awareness of potential obstacles that could lead to relapse.

### **Additional Resources**

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Compassion ([www.breathofrelief.com](http://www.breathofrelief.com)) Pro-QOL survey  
([www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/tests.htm](http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/tests.htm))

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FBxfd7DL3E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FBxfd7DL3E) (Positive Psychology)

[www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu) (happiness scale)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yetHqWODp0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yetHqWODp0) (life=risk)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnOxvbGOTbM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnOxvbGOTbM) (southwest rap)

## Key Definitions

- **Vicarious trauma** – change in the inner experience of the advocate resulting from empathic engagement with a survivor.
- **Secondary traumatic stress** – presence of PTSD symptoms caused by a least one indirect exposure to trauma (Figley, 2002).
- **Burnout** – a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Leiter & Maslach, 2004).
- **Self-care** – antidotes advocates use to prevent or ameliorate disruptions in their frame of reference due to vicarious trauma.

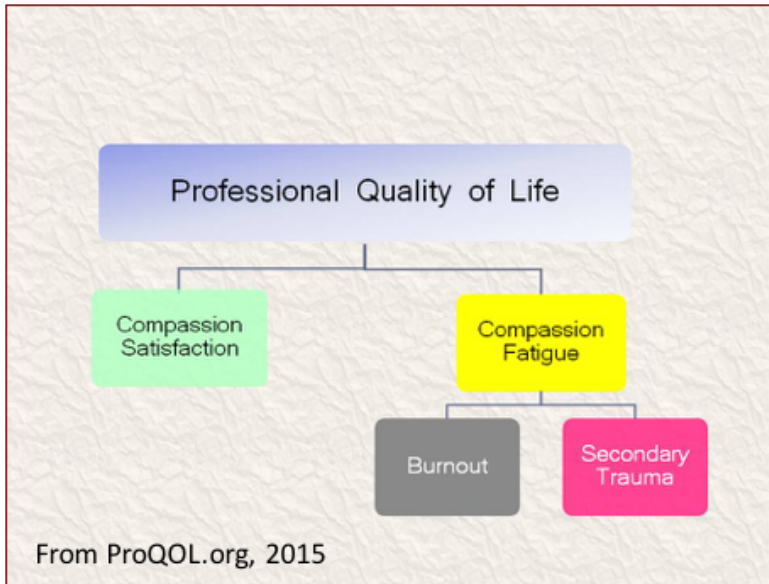


## Key Definitions

- **Compassion fatigue** – a state of tension and preoccupation with traumatized survivors by re-experiencing the traumatic events, avoidance/numbing of reminders, and persistent arousal associated with survivors (Figley, 2002).
- **Compassion satisfaction** – the ability to receive gratification from caregiving (Simon, Pryce, Roff, & Klemmack, 2006).

While we often focus on compassion fatigue, there is a great deal of research on how many people go into roles like advocacy because of the immense satisfaction they receive.

# Preventing Burnout



Emotions  
are  
contagious

# Organizational Predictors of Burnout

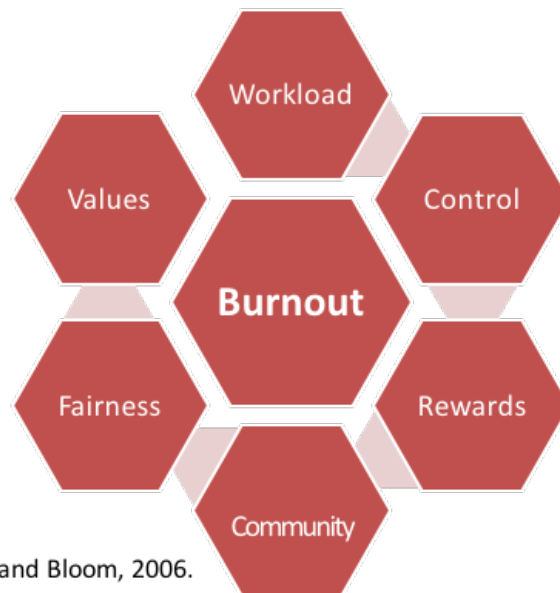
- Workload – job demands placed on employee given a specified amount of time and resources.
- Control – opportunity for employees to make important decisions about their work, as well as their range of professional autonomy and ability to gain access to resources necessary to do the job.
- Community – quality of social context in which one works, including relationships with management, colleagues, and supervisees.
- Fairness – extent that openness and respect are present in the organization and the decision-making process.
- Values – represent the congruence between the organization's priorities and the values of the employee.
- Rewards – are staff rewarded for taking care of themselves or for seemingly superhuman abilities to work all the time?

Adapted from Maslach & Leiter, 1997 and Bloom, 2006.



# Organizational Predictors of Burnout

**Trauma-organized** – an organization with high levels of burnout and secondary trauma; low levels of compassion satisfaction, high absenteeism, high employee turnover, frequent boundary violations, and professional misconduct.



Adapted from Maslach & Leiter, 1997 and Bloom, 2006.

# Components of Burnout

## Exhaustion

- Stress dimension
- Emotional and cognitive distancing from work
- Poor service delivery

## Cynicism

- Interpersonal dimension
- Depersonalization from work
- Belief in the inevitability of trauma

## Inefficacy

- Self evaluative dimension
- Low productivity
- Feelings of incompetence

Adapted from Maslach, Shaufeli, & Leiter, 2011

# Signs of Burnout

- ✓ Feeling helpless or hopeless
- ✓ A sense one can never do enough
- ✓ Hypervigilance
- ✓ Diminished creativity
- ✓ Inability to embrace complexity
- ✓ Minimizing
- ✓ Addictions
- ✓ Anger and cynicism
- ✓ Chronic exhaustion/ physical ailments
- ✓ Inability to listen/ deliberate avoidance
- ✓ Dissociative moments
- ✓ Sense of persecution
- ✓ Guilt
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Grandiosity
- ✓ Inability to empathize/ numbness



Adapted from Laura van der Noot Lipsky's *Trauma Stewardship*.

## Individual Strategies

1. Regularly assess yourself so you can be proactive if you exhibit signs.
2. Start a go-to self-care list and refer to it for ideas when you feel stuck.
3. Find time for yourself every day and schedule it in. Hold that time sacred.
4. Ask for help, professionally and personally.
5. Create a ritual to transition between work and home.
6. Say “no.” It is a complete sentence on its own.
7. Assess trauma inputs in your environment and seek ways to mitigate them.

## Individual Strategies

8. Educate yourself on compassion fatigue. The more you know about it, the more you can prevent it in yourself and recognize it in others.
9. Join a supervision or peer support group. Regular support is helpful to sustainability and curbing feelings of isolation.
10. Attend workshops and professional training.
11. Consider alternative scheduling. This work can involve a lot of night/weekend responsibilities, and nontraditional schedules can help ensure you're not just working all the time. Survivors deserve 24/7 support. You alone cannot be 24/7 support.
12. Exercise and go outside.



## Organizational Strategies (1)

- Provide respite for staff (shared coverage, time off).
- Assign reasonable caseloads. Crisis intervention can be time-intensive and emotionally challenging.
- Offer qualified and consistent supervision. If there is no one qualified to provide this on your campus, contracting out is crucial for both support and guidance.
- Affirm severity and pervasiveness of clients' trauma and vicarious trauma of staff.

## Organization Strategies (2)

- Normalize self-care and ensure leadership is modeling it.
- Address signs of vicarious trauma and center compassion satisfaction.
- Minimize situations with role conflict. A survivor advocate cannot be wearing too many hats at once.
- Provide sufficient vacation time and flexible scheduling.
- Build relationships from a place of empathy and knowledge of impact of compassion fatigue.

## Organizational Strategies (3)

- Enable collective decision-making.
- Limit personal liability.
- Provide support for personal therapy or professional support groups.
- Foster a culture of peer support, not competition.
- Provide adequate time for sleep. Advocates should not regularly spend overnights with survivors in the hospital followed by full work days.

## Organizational Strategies (4)

- Allow for uninterrupted time to complete tasks. A team approach is crucial to ensure that there is adequate coverage without unrealistic expectations. A one-person program cannot be 24/7 or suitable for walk-ins.
- Increase staff feelings of effectiveness in their roles through training, supporting, and acknowledgment.
- Ensure accessible channels for feedback, both for positive areas and areas that need improvement, to ensure that feedback is not only negative.