

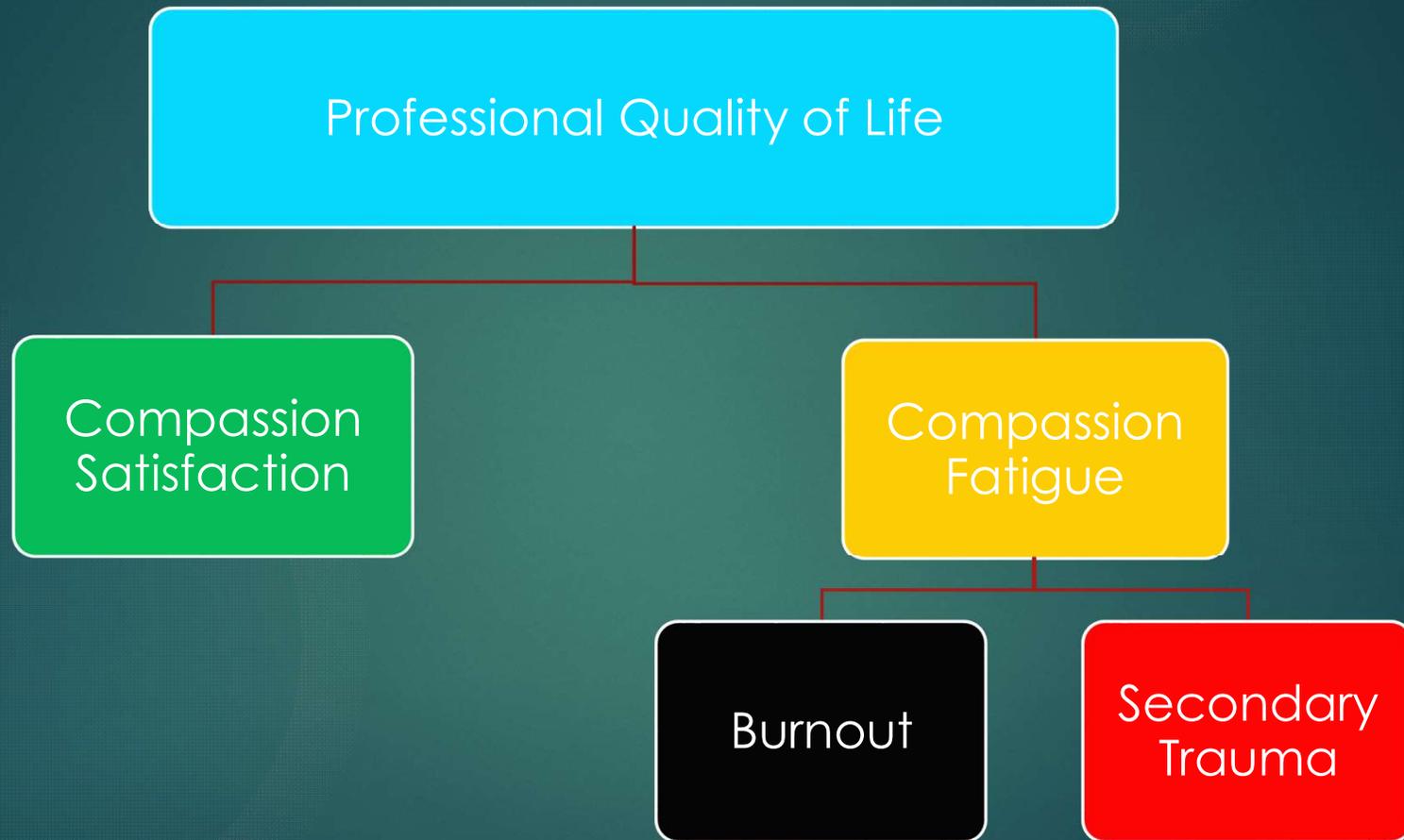


# Self Care During Covid-19

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# Objectives

- ▶ Discuss burnout, fatigue, and secondary trauma in COVID-19
- ▶ Review self-care tips to enhance well-being and workplace camaraderie



# Covid-19

## Examples of Burnout, Fatigue, Secondary Trauma

- ▶ Quick, unexpected shift to work at home
- ▶ Technical and logistical difficulties
- ▶ Decreased face to face support from coworkers
- ▶ Decreased (or increased?) productivity/efficiency
- ▶ Increased distress in veterans we serve
- ▶ Increased worry regarding personal and veteran health/safety
- ▶ Increased worry for vulnerable populations and society as a whole

# Self-Care – what is it?

- ▶ Self-care is an essential work survival skill, meaning it is necessary for your effectiveness and success in honoring your professional and personal commitments
- ▶ Self-care refers to activities and practices that we can engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress as well as maintain and enhance our short- and longer-term health and wellbeing
- ▶ “Just like you do on a plane, you need to put on your own oxygen mask first before trying to help others”
  - ▶ -Nancy Smyth, State University of New York

# Self-Care Inventory

\*Please give yourself one point for each statement you agree with

1. I have good sleep hygiene
2. I eat healthy meals
3. I drink enough water
4. I engage in exercise/physical movement
5. I schedule regular doctor/dental appointments
6. I spend quality time with family/friends
7. I set healthy boundaries at work
8. I set healthy boundaries at home
9. I engage in positive self-talk
10. I set aside time for hobbies and things I enjoy

# Fatigue – per CDC

- ▶ Many workers are stretched thin in COVID-19, working longer or different hours than usual, which can lead to poor sleep and fatigue
- ▶ Under regular circumstances, adults need 7–9 hours of sleep per night, along with opportunities for rest while awake for optimal health and well-being
- ▶ Fatigue increases the risk for injury and deteriorating health (infections, illnesses, and mental health disorders)

# Excess Screen Time in COVID-19

- ▶ COVID-19 has resulted in a huge increase in screen time
- ▶ Excess screen time, especially later in the evening, can have a detrimantal impact on sleep. Not only can it stimulate the brain in ways that make it hard to wind down, but the blue light from screens can suppress the natural production of melatonin, a hormone that the body makes to help us sleep

# Tips to improve sleep

- ▶ Incorporate steady routines to provide time cues during the day
  - ▶ Same wake up time, wind down, and bedtime
  - ▶ Showering and getting dressed even if you aren't leaving the house
  - ▶ Eating meals at the same time each day
  - ▶ Blocking off specific time periods for work and exercise
  - ▶ If you can, spend some time outside in natural light. Even if the sun isn't shining brightly, natural light still has positive effects on circadian rhythm

# Tips to improve sleep

- ▶ Avoid sunlight or bright lights 90 minutes before you go to sleep, when possible. Exposure to light just before bedtime can cause you to feel more awake
- ▶ You'll sleep better if your room is comfortable, dark, cool, and quiet
- ▶ Consider using blackout shades at home when sleeping

# Prevention/Intervention

- ▶ Reduce/disperse difficult caseload, as possible
- ▶ Physical list of examples of compassion satisfaction
- ▶ Schedule daily breaks
- ▶ Take vacation/mental health days
- ▶ Peer supervision/coworker support & consultation
- ▶ Education & training (e.g., COVID specific, best practices)
- ▶ Personal coping mechanisms
- ▶ Support from loved ones (e.g., taking 30 min to yourself after work, finding new and regular ways to connect during quarantine)

# Finding Camaraderie When Working Virtual

Dr. Michal Wilson, Medical Advisor, VHA Homeless Program Office

- ▶ Recognizing the disruption and uncertainty we are all facing
- ▶ Process and potentially grieve
  - ▶ Recognize this can be harder to do in isolation
  - ▶ Consider both current as well as anticipatory grief
- ▶ Leaders finding ways to identify those who are struggling
- ▶ Harder to do in virtual work environment
- ▶ But can still find ways to be available, as well as reach out and check in with staff/teams

# Self-Care – list of activities

Fun reading  
Calling someone you love  
Spending time with your pets  
Stretching  
Prayer  
Good food  
Journaling  
Relaxation techniques (body scan, guided imagery, mindfulness)  
Fresh air  
Taking a nap  
Exercise  
Stretch  
Chair Yoga  
Massage  
Hot shower or bath  
Inspiring quotes

Goof around a bit  
Be selfish- do one thing today just because it makes you happy  
10-15 minutes in the sun  
Read watch something that makes you laugh  
Engage in your hobbies  
Ask for help  
Supervision/Consultation  
Set Boundaries and be assertive  
Meditation group at work  
End the day identifying 3 things you did well  
Journal  
Gratitude Journal  
Take a vacation



Mahalo!

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