

Self-Care, Stress, and Trauma Exposure Response for Legal Professionals



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GOAL:

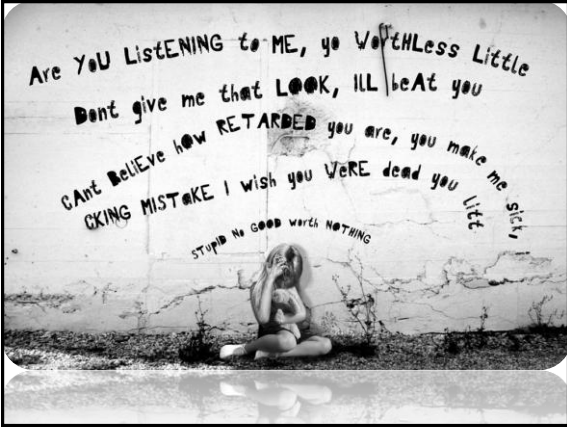
Promote an understanding of self care as it relates to the legal profession and identify strategies to promote health and well-being.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand how our stress response works.
2. Identify warning signs of Trauma Exposure Response.
3. Identify healthy coping strategies to maintain and self care.

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JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Of 103 Occupations
Lawyers
had Highest Incidence of
DEPRESSION

Eaton, W. W. (1993). Occupations and the prevalence of major depressive disorder. *Journal of Occupational Medicine*, 32 (11), 1079-1087.

**Death rate
by suicide
6x
the rate
of general
population**

North Carolina Lawyer Assistance Program

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**Between
15% and 24%.
Roughly 1 in 5 lawyers
is addicted to alcohol.**

Drug and Alcohol Abuse & Addiction in the Legal Profession
http://www.benchmarkinstitute.org/2_by_1mcdv1a.pdf

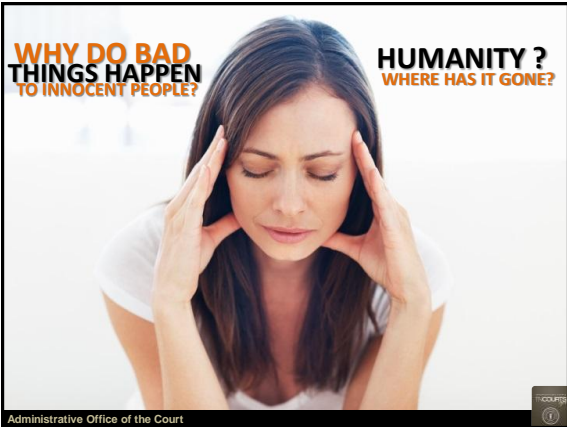
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**105 judges in criminal Family & Juvenile courts.
65% experienced symptoms of vicarious trauma.**

Peter Jaffe, Claire Crooks, Billie Lee Dunford-Jackson, & M. Town, *Vicarious Trauma in Judges: The Personal Challenge of Dispensing Justice*. 54 *Law. & Fam. Ct. J.* 17 (2003).

re-experiencing images of the traumas of the person receiving aid,
avoidance of reminders of this material, numbing in affect and
function, and persistent arousal.
individuals come to doubt deeply held beliefs about safety, the
inherent kindness of others, and intimacy.


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HOMEOSTASIS

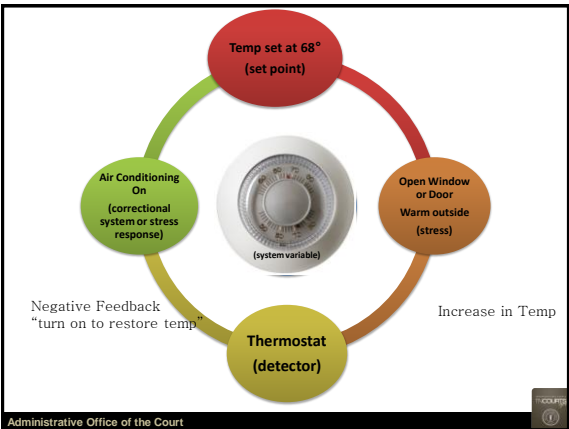


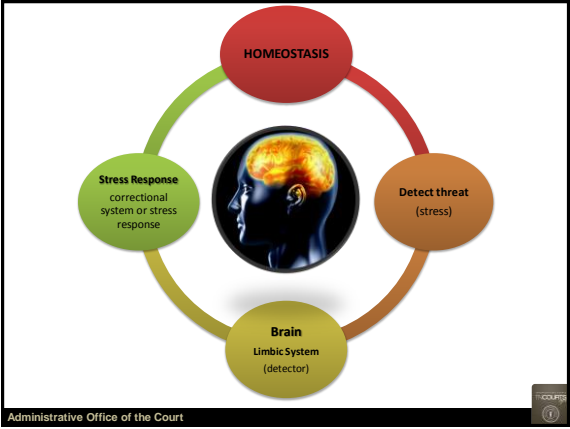
A state of equilibrium,
or a tendency to reach equilibrium.

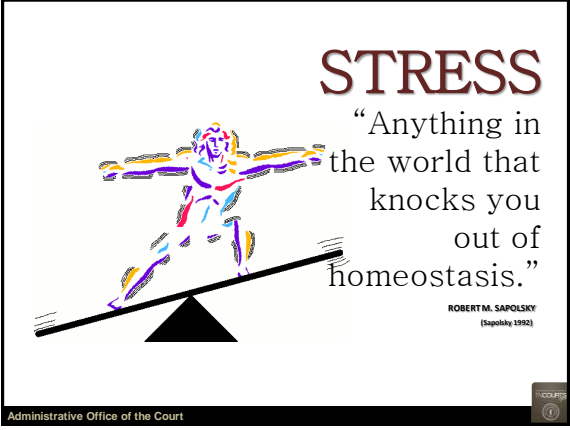
BALANCE

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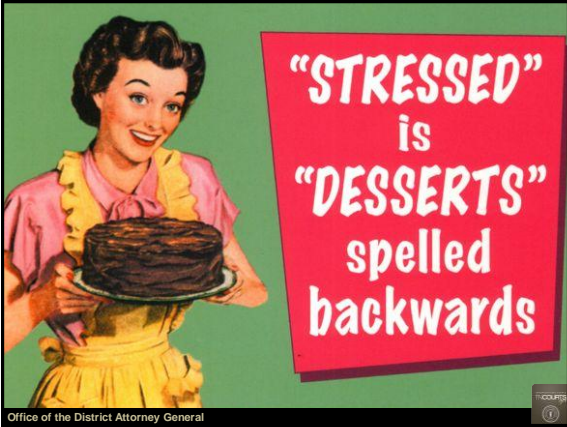


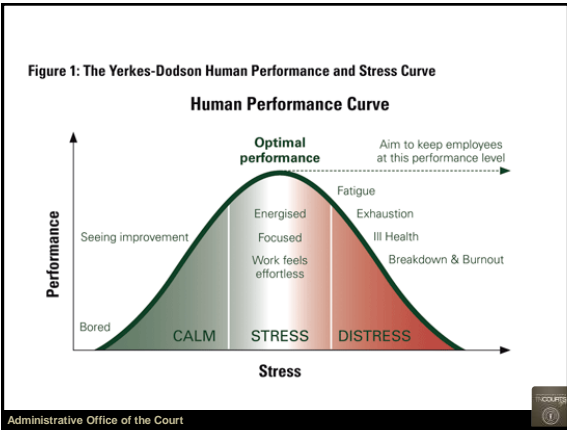


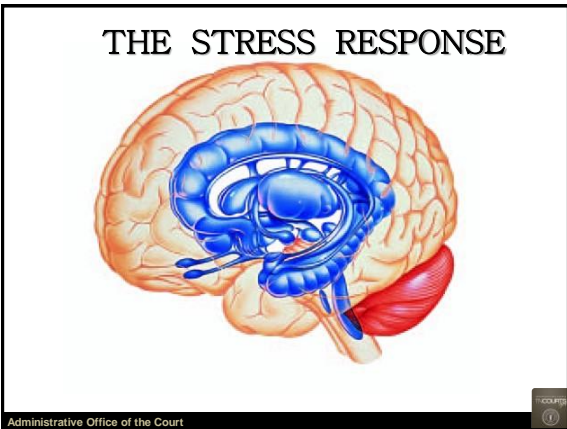












THE STRESS RESPONSE



Mobilization of Energy
Increased Cardiovascular Tone
(heart rate)
Suppression of digestion
Suppression of growth
Suppression of reproduction
Suppression of immune system
Sharpening of cognition,
alertness, and pleasure.



Robert M. Sapolsky. *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: An Updated Guide To Stress, Stress Related Diseases, and Coping*. 2nd Rev Ed, April 15, 1998
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- Fat cells & liver to “empty the bank”
- This places sugar in the bloodstream

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- Accelerate movement of sugars through blood
- Increase intake of oxygen for bloodstream

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- Digestion is “slow and expensive” – shut down
- Mouth dry – shut down secretion of saliva

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Fighting infection is not priority – all resources to mobilized to deal with stressor.

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CHRONIC STRESS

The stress response continues to be active – uses all resources to stay in stay alert (at the expense of using resources for other systems).

The neurohormones released are good for short stress periods – but can become harmful when in the system for long periods of time.

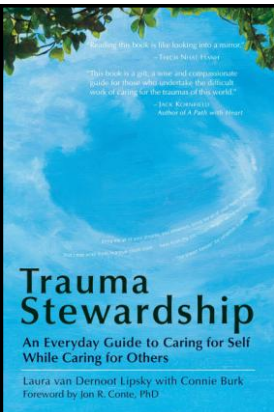
Each recurring stress event causes subsequent sensitivity to the sympathetic response so that the individual becomes more vulnerable to depression and anxiety (Post, Rubinow, & Ballenger 1986)

When stress is prolonged or chronic, changes occur in the baseline production, availability, and homeostasis regulation of these neurochemicals. (Cozzilino 2002)

The more a neural system is 'activated' the more the system changes to reflect the pattern or activation. (Perry 2001)

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TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

defined as the transformation that takes place **within us** as a result of exposure to the suffering of other living beings or the planet.

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16 WARNING SIGNS of TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

1. **Feeling Helpless and Hopeless-** Are we making an impact? What's the point?
2. **A Sense That One Can Never Do Enough-** Urgency in the workplace? Am I good enough? Tough Enough? Smart Enough?
3. **Hypervigilance-** "A dynamic of being wholly focused on our job, to the extent that being present for anything else in our lives can seem impossible." Do you feel like you are always "on"?
4. **Diminished Creativity-** Do you get bored with what you're doing in your work? Do you feel stagnant in your ability to be innovative?

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16 WARNING SIGNS of TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

5. **Inability to Embrace Complexity-** Taking sides? Cliques, gossip, rigid expectations of workers?
6. **Minimizing-** Does it take a more intense level of suffering to get your attention? Comparing cases, and trivializing importance? Loss of compassion and inability to empathize.
7. **Chronic Exhaustion/Physical Ailments-** Belief that we have no choice about the work that we do. Accepted aspect of one's work? Fatigue is an accepted aspect of the seasoned worker's demeanor. Workplace culture?

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16 WARNING SIGNS of TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

- 8. **Inability to Listen/Deliberate Avoidance-** Is the highlight of your workday when you don't have to do your job? Has avoidance begun to show up in your personal life? Going out with friends less and less- or only go out with people who specifically "get it"? Avoiding answering phone calls? Losing interest in things that once brought you joy?
- 9. **Dissociative Moments-** Have you lost track of moments in your work because something someone said has unhinged you? Difficulty staying present? Remembering the last difficult story that you heard while talking with another client/colleague/friend/family member?
- 10. **Sense of Persecution-** Feeling a profound lack of efficacy in your work/life? Martyrdom.

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16 WARNING SIGNS of TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

- 11. **Guilt-** Do you ever feel guilty about finding things in life pleasurable when clients you work with are suffering? Guilt distracts us from being present in our lives as well as hinders our ability to absorb what is well/good/precious/fulfilling in our own lives.
- 12. **Fear-** Bearing witness to the suffering of others brings to light the dangers in the world. There is an opportunity to deepen compassion if fear is acknowledged. More like our clients than we anticipated?
- 13. **Anger and Cynicism-** Do you know how your anger looks to others/your support system/your partner? Is your humor in the work place responsible or cynical?

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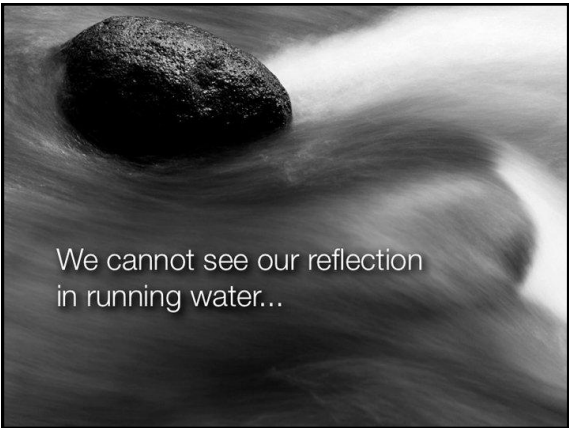
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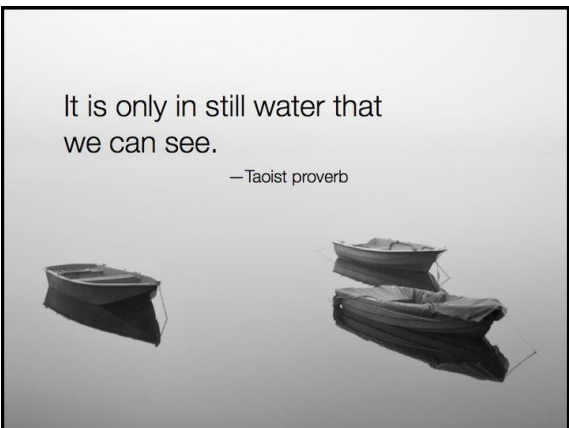
- 14. **Inability to Empathize/Numbing-** Often happens after one's system becomes overwhelmed. Difficulty experiencing any type of emotion? Or difficulty regulating emotion? Crying at a TV commercial? Yelling at the dog/colleague/family member? Not experiencing emotion that is congruent with the situation at hand?
- 15. **Addictions-** Do you use alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, other distractions to check out? Addicted to the rush of adrenaline> desire to stay wired so you don't have to slow down and really feel what is going on within and around you? Overworking can be an addiction.
- 16. **Grandiosity: Inflated Sense of Importance Related to One's Work-** If our work is breathtakingly important, so are we. Who else would/could do this job if I'm not here?

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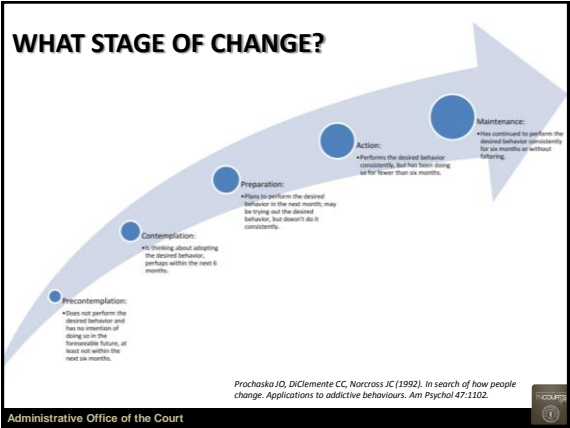


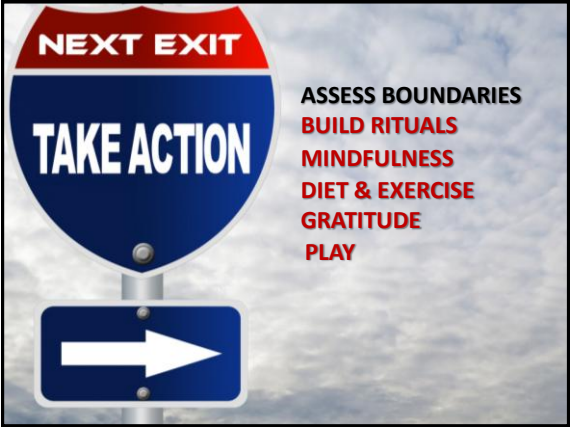


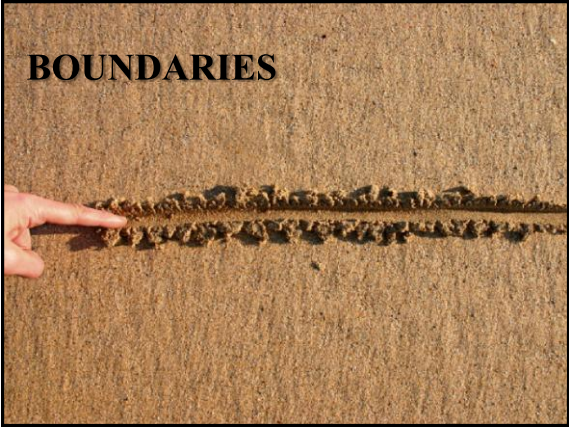












BOUNDARIES
RESPONSE FLEXIBILITY

Can Emerge Out of Anxiety (tendency to protect) & Defensiveness
Can Generate Shame & Avoidance in others.

Can Emerge Out of Fear (tendency to please) & Protection
Can Generate Fear & Anxiety in others (unpredictable)

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BOUNDARIES
RESPONSE FLEXIBILITY

Mindful, Reflective Behavior, that is consistent, safe, and predictable. It emerges from a place of reflection, thoughtfulness and intentionality.

Open enough for changes AND consistent enough for stability & safety.

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Daily Practice of Caring for Self
PUT YOUR MASK ON FIRST



DO YOU HAVE RITUALS FOR YOU?
DO YOU HAVE RITUALS IN
YOUR WORKPLACE?



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WE HAVE ALL
SURVIVED
SOMETHING.

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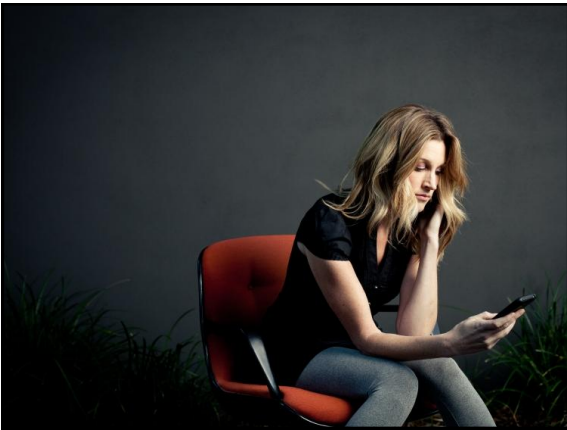


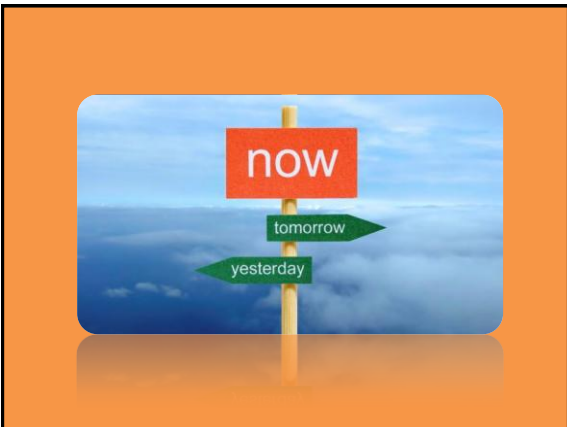
I'm leaving work to go home and check work email.

somecards

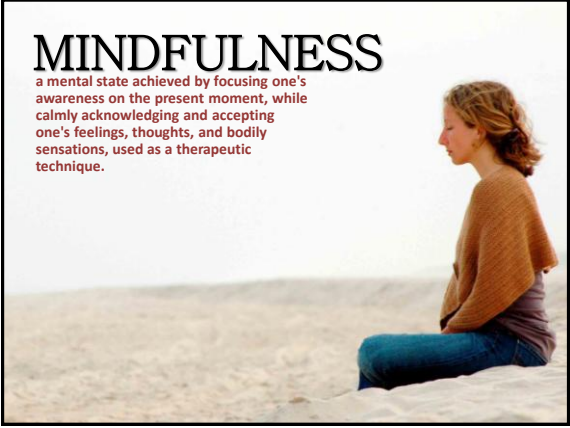
Build Routines & Rituals to Leave Work
- AT WORK

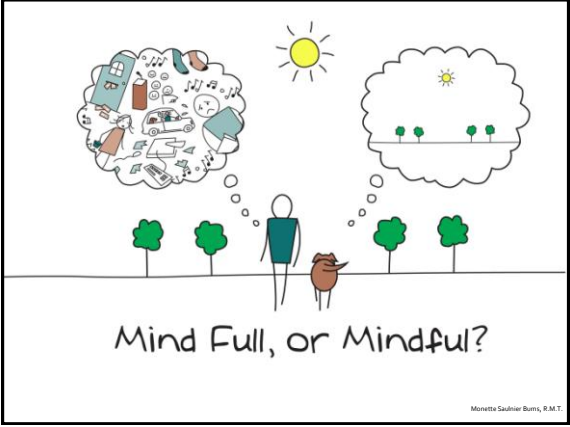
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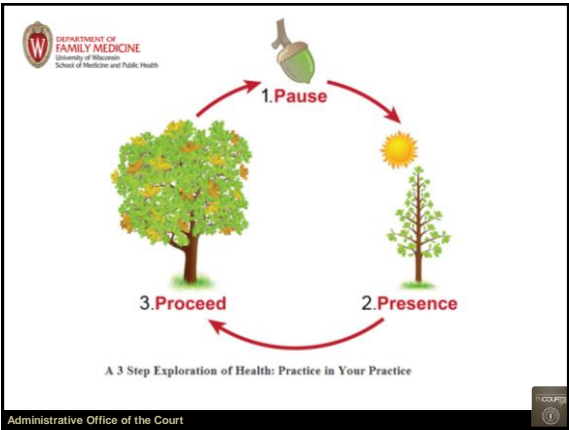


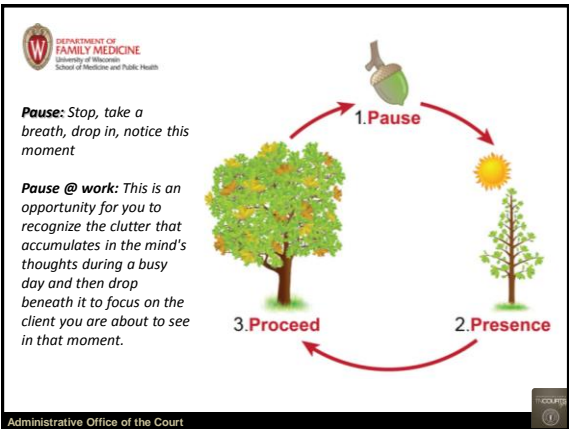









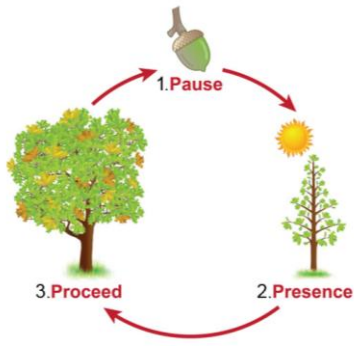






DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE
 University of Missouri
 School of Medicine and Public Health

Presence: Drop in, being aware of what is happening in the moment, experiencing body sensations, noticing thoughts, feeling emotions. Staying present with and accepting whatever arises just as it is moment by moment without reactivity.

Presence @ work: This is your opportunity to be fully present in the moment, non-judgmentally with the individuals you are serving. This allows more authentic understanding of their needs.

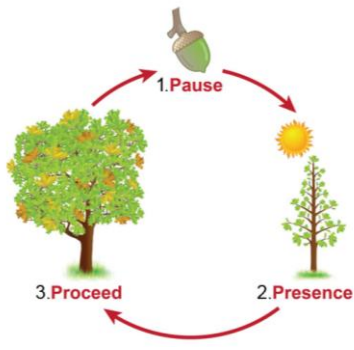


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DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE
 University of Missouri
 School of Medicine and Public Health

Proceed: Using mindful speech and action to respond skillfully, compassionately, and with positive intention to whatever needs attention in this moment.


Proceed @ work: After obtaining insight into your client's needs during "presence," it is now time to use this information to create a plan towards advocating for your clients legal rights.



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"Our minds drift to and fro, buffeted by sensation like a boat upon stormy seas. The breath serves as an anchor, something to which we can tether our minds so that we can be present for the real."

—Rolf Gates and Katrina Kenison, Meditations from the Mat
What About You?
A Workbook for Those Who Work with Others



Finding the Time
 Self-care does not have to be time-consuming. As nice as it would be to take a three-week vacation to a tropical island, most of us do not have the time or resources for that. Below are some tips for using the time that you do have effectively.

If you have...

2 minutes

- Breathe
- Stretch
- Daydream
- Take your stress temperature
- Laugh
- Doodle
- Acknowledge one of your accomplishments
- Say no to a new responsibility
- Complement yourself
- Look out the window
- Spend time with your pet
- Share a favorite joke

5 minutes

- Listen to music
- Have a cleansing cry
- Chat with a co-worker
- Sing out loud
- Jot down dreams
- Step outside for fresh air
- Enjoy a snack or make a cup of coffee/tea

10 minutes

- Evaluate your day
- Write in a journal
- Call a friend
- Meditate
- Tidy your work area
- Assess your self care
- Draw a picture
- Dance
- Listen to soothing sounds
- Surf the web
- Read a magazine

30 minutes

- Get a massage
- Exercise
- Eat lunch with a co-worker
- Take a bubble bath
- Read non-work related literature
- Spend time in nature
- Go shopping
- Practice yoga
- Watch your favorite television show

What About You?
 A Workbook for Those Who Work with Others

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NEXT EXIT
TAKE ACTION

ASSESS BOUNDARIES
BUILD RITUALS
MINDFULNESS
DIET & EXERCISE
GRATITUDE
PLAY











CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

Write a thank-you note. You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person's impact on your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver and read it in person if possible. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.

Thank someone mentally. No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a gratitude journal. Make it a habit to write down or share with a loved one thoughts about the gifts you've received each day.

Count your blessings. Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.

Pray. People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

Meditate. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the present moment without judgment. Although people often focus on a word or phrase (such as "peace"), it is also possible to focus on what you're grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.).

Harvard Health Publications
 In Praise of Gratitude

