CHAMPS/WMT AHEC RESILIENCY LEARNING COMMUNITY

BUILDING RESILIENCY SKILLS: WALKING TOGETHER TOWARDS HEALING IN A TIME OF COLLECTIVE LOSS

WEEK TWO: TRAUMA AND RESILIENCY

PRESENTER: MOLLY M. MOLLOY, LCSW – DIRECTOR, WESTERN MONTANA AHEC
TRAUMA AND RESILIENCY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Molly M. Molloy, MSW LCSW
Director, Western Montana AHEC
Co-Director, MUS-IPE Institute
“Each person’s grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed. That doesn’t mean needing someone to try to lessen it or reframe it for them. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.”

David Kessler
Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief

Unlocking Us PODCAST WITH BRENÉ BROWN | EPISODE #5
SO WHAT ARE YOU CERTAIN OF THIS WEEK?

- Today I am certain that I love my hair.
- I am certain that I love my job.
- Today I am certain that my family is awesome.
- Today I am certain that I need to breathe through it.
- I am certain that today I am okay.
- Today I am certain that I am resilient and we will continue to be! 😊
GOALS

- Trauma caused by COVID-19
- Moral Distress
- Re-thinking Resilience
I remodeled my bathroom.

I cleaned out every closet in the house.

Hey, I got out of bed and put some mascara on!
TRAUMA AND COVID-19

• Collective trauma – “We are not in the same boat, BUT we are all in the same storm.” - unknown
What is Trauma?

Trauma may stem from:

• A single event (auto accident, loss of a loved one, etc.)

• Complex, multiple events, prolonged or repeating over time

• Structural violence (social structure that is harmful)

• Collective (community, generational, historical (war, slavery, genocide, etc.))
RESPONSES TO STRESS AND TRAUMA

• Patricia Fischer says many factors impact our stress response:
  • Exposure – We get exposed to different stressors, trauma or trauma inputs
  • Experience – Each of us will experience trauma/stress differently
  • Response – Each of us will react and respond in our own individual ways

Honoring that we are individuals and will cope differently.
STRESS - IGNITING OUR FIGHT
FLIGHT FREEZE

• Autonomic Nervous Systems activated when we experience a threat
  • “We are pretty good at dealing with spikes in stress levels as long as we get back to a relaxed state. Unfortunately many people are consistently living with higher levels of chronic stress and their bodies are simply unable to experience any respite from the pressure.”

• Toxic stress
  • Prolonged activation of stress response and failure of body to fully recover

  “We are all magnificent monsters.” Laura McKowen
MORAL DISTRESS

• “[...] happens when there are inconsistencies between a [helper’ s] beliefs and his or her actions in practice” (Baylis 2000)

“when policies or routines conflict with [...] beliefs about [...] patient care” Mitchell 2000
• The Compassion Fatigue Workbook, F. Mathieu (2012)

• Examples:
  • Are we seeing the best in people? Is the worst coming through? Making sense of the actions of others.
  • Being told to use the same PPE all day with every patient/lack of testing and treatment
Bouncing back but what are bouncing back to? What is the new normal?
• Resilience may look different now…
  • Normal strategies (being with friends, going to dinner, family outing) are not necessarily accessible
  • New coping has emerged
  • Temporary skills and long term resilience
  • Seeing your resilience and working to avoid self-judgment

• What works now?
• What have you been able to continue?
• What makes you smile?
• What makes you stop and pause?
RESILIENCE IN PRACTICE

• Self-Compassion
  • How would you treat a friend? What would you say?

• Staying in the now – mindfulness
  • Anxiety doesn’t exist in the present. It is alive in the past and in the future.

• Connection with people
  • Even though we are connecting differently we are able to

• Awareness and Acceptance
  • Interesting – It is what it is.
AWE

• Awe happens each day – for big things but also for small things.
• Please take a moment and think of a recent situation where a person’s (maybe even you) strength, courage, kindness moved you.
• Hold on to this for our time together.

“You know, it seems to me that there is so much more to the world than the average eye is allowed to see. I believe that if you look hard, there are more wonders than you could have dreamed up.”

-Dr. Who
This pandemic experience is a massive experiment in collective vulnerability. We can be our worst selves when we’re afraid, or our very best, bravest selves. In the context of fear and vulnerability, there is often very little in between because when we are uncertain and afraid our default is self-protection. We don’t have to be scary when we’re scared. Let’s choose awkward, brave, and kind.

And let’s choose each other.
THANK YOU!

Contact Information:
• Molly.molloy@umontana.edu
• 406.243.7940 (w) or 406.360.7439 (c)