

**“Caring for Self in the light of  
Caring for Others”  
Celebrating Diversity – March 27, 2010**

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Making the Difference Counselling & Consulting*

# Our Tasks as Counsellors

- ▶ Help clients manage their problems in living more effectively and develop unused resources and missed opportunities more fully
- ▶ Help clients become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives



# Our Tasks include...

- ▶ Accompanying
- ▶ Listening & discerning
- ▶ Attending
- ▶ Providing a safe space
- ▶ Answering questions
- ▶ Facilitating
- ▶ Accepting
- ▶ Being yourself
- ▶ Giving of yourself
- ▶ Guiding as appropriate
- ▶ Being ethical in what we do and who we are



# Some problems ...

- ▶ Negative consequences of therapeutic work are often unconscious:
  - All emotions are contagious
  - Compassion fatigue – the result of serving in a helping capacity
  - Vicarious traumatization
  - Countertransference
  - Burn out

# Stress & Burnout

- ▶ State of fatigue/frustration when devotion to a cause, way of life or relationship fails to produce the expected outcome
- ▶ Exacerbated by role ambiguities, personal & family stresses, environmental & organisational hassles
- ▶ Begins with failure to meet our own expectations
- ▶ Discrepancy between expectation and reality
- ▶ Progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose that comes from excessively striving to reach some unrealistic goal

# The challenge ...



# Understanding ourselves ...

- ▶ As Counsellors, we are inextricably intertwined with treatment success
- ▶ We are often running against the tide
- ▶ Our Self-care is an ethical imperative
- ▶ Self-awareness and Self-monitoring
- ▶ Do we make self-care a priority?
- ▶ How do we deal with physical isolation?
- ▶ Emotional isolation is real
- ▶ Dealing with client behaviours and self-talk

# Our Needs ...

- ▶ Value ourselves
- ▶ Nurture relationships
- ▶ Set boundaries
- ▶ Sustain healthy escapes
- ▶ Consider personal therapy
- ▶ Recognise the hazards
- ▶ Create a positive environment
- ▶ Foster creativity and growth
- ▶ Cultivate spirituality and growth

# Relationship needs

- ▶ Nurturing business relationships
  - Clinical Colleagues
  - Peer Support / Supervision Groups
  - Counselling / Clinical Teams
  - Staff
  - Professionals in the Community
  - Supervisors
  - Mentors
  - Clients

# Relationship needs

- ▶ Nurturing personal relationships
  - Spouse / Partner
  - Family members
  - Friends
  - Relaxation
  - Humour
  - Personal Mentors
  - Personal counsellor / Psychotherapist
  - Personal retreats / meditation



# Physical needs

- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Bodily rest
- ▶ Nutrition and Hydration
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Human contact



# Your Spiritual Needs

- ▶ To find meaning in life
- ▶ To search & question
- ▶ To be listened to respectfully
- ▶ To be answered honestly
- ▶ To be loved and respected
- ▶ To have opportunity to grow
- ▶ To travel in hope



# Cultivating Spirituality and Mission

- ▶ Commitment to growth
- ▶ Pursuing the ultimate questions
- ▶ Continuing education
- ▶ Integration of spirituality into practice
- ▶ Letting your life speak – accepting your true self
- ▶ Becoming creative
- ▶ Diversify...creativity is released when we diversify

# Setting boundaries

- ▶ Defining Your role
- ▶ Defining the role of the Client
- ▶ Defining the Boundaries of the Therapeutic Relationship
- ▶ Defining relationships with Colleagues and Staff
- ▶ Defining Boundaries with Family and Friends
- ▶ Clients outside the office
- ▶ Colleagues outside the office

# Cognitive Errors

- ▶ Selective abstraction – measuring yourself by errors
- ▶ Overwhelming tasks
- ▶ Assuming causality – assigning blame and adverse events to ourselves
- ▶ Catastrophizing
- ▶ Not managing transference (helplessness)

# Your environment

- ▶ Physical environment – sensory awareness
- ▶ Work safety
- ▶ Business support
- ▶ Behavioural boundaries – separating yourself from clinical work by means of routine and time



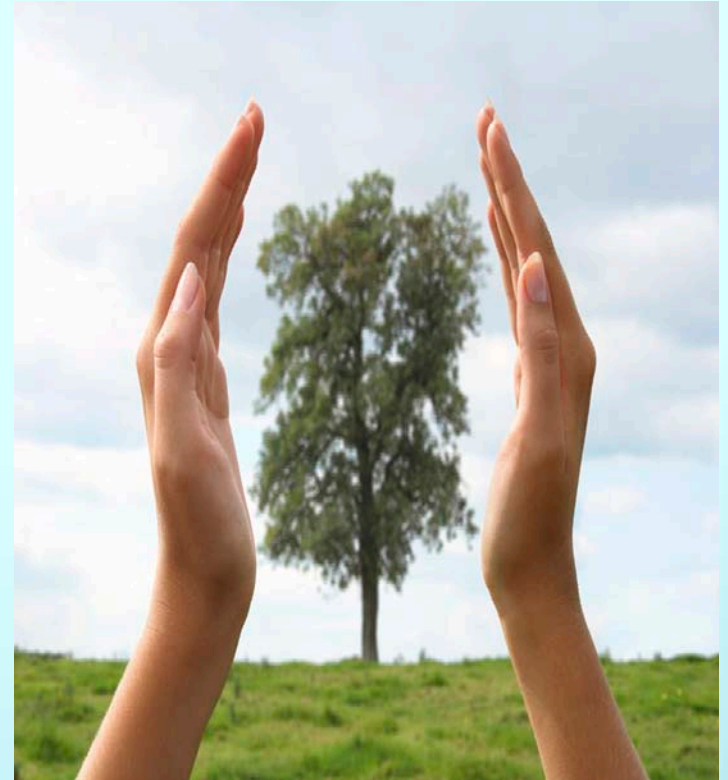
# What is our plan for self care?



# Don't carry the burden alone ...

## *Consider:*

- ▶ Supervision
- ▶ Group Supervision
- ▶ Peer Supervision
- ▶ A Mentor
- ▶ A Spiritual Companion
- ▶ Networking



# References

- Norcross, J. C. & Guy. J. D. (2007) ***Leaving it at the Office – A Guide to Psychotherapist Self-Care***. New York: The Guildford Press
- Rothschild, B. (2006) ***Help for the Helper: Self-Care Strategies for Managing Burnout and Stress***. Los Angeles: W. W. Norton & Co.

