Wellness and Resilience Strategies: Mind

Our fatigue is often caused not by work, but by worry, frustration, and resentment.” — Dale Carnegie

“The calm and balanced mind is the strong and great mind; the hurried and agitated mind is the weak one.” — Wallace D. Wattles

The four sectors of the compass model -Mind, Spirit, Strength and Heart- not only contribute to our overall wellness, but also provide guidance on strategies to help build our compassion resilience. Before delving in further, you may want to take a self-assessment of your current wellness practices (attached). Hold onto this and notice any that you marked as “this never occurred to me” as you encounter the next four sections of the toolkit.

Mind is the first sector we will explore. Being resilient in this area is exemplified by being well-organized, engaging in meaningful work, and being fully present in the moment. Mindfulness is a contemplative practice of being intentionally aware in the present moment. Mindfulness will be a key skill used in many of the Mind Section activities as well as those that follow (Spirit, Strength, and Heart).

The practice of mindfulness is displayed in this brief, animated video. In short, mindfulness involves focusing our attention on the present and noticing our thoughts and feelings with an attitude of acceptance. The goal of mindfulness is to be fully present with our emotions (HEART), with others (HEART), with our bodies (STRENGTH), with our environment (MIND), and with the universe (SPIRIT); therefore, mindfulness is a key skill that will form a foundation for building our compassion resilience in all four sectors of the wellness compass. It is through being fully present and aware and observing oneself mindfully that we can participate most effectively in building our own resilience and wellness. A lot of mindfulness practices involve using an anchor, such as breathing, as a way to turn attention back to the present moment. In this 4-minute video children show how mindfulness can be a helpful strategy for both adults and children.

Mindfulness is not only a mechanism to sharpen our attention, but is also a means of strengthening our compassion and empathy. Specifically, mindfulness is associated with increased self-compassion, higher compassion resilience, and lower compassion fatigue.¹


Developed in partnership with:

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Because mindfulness is so intimately connected to compassion resilience and the strategies that follow, you may find it useful to assess how mindful you are; perhaps see where you are at now, then take the survey again after completing the strategy sections of the toolkit:

How the practice of mindfulness can help build resilience in the Mind area of the wellness compass:

This area of wellness has to do with how we manage our time, work space, and belongings. Let’s pretend that Mary, a zealot in her first year of nursing who volunteers at every opportunity, is starting to feel overcommitted and over-scheduled. One week, Mary takes some extra shifts, is late to a care meeting, and begins to feel strapped for time to dedicate to her daily documentation work. Mary, ever attentive of when her life feels out of balance, notices how her penchant to say “yes” to everything has made it such that she cannot give her all to the things she has agreed to do. Rather than engage in self-blame (a form of judgment), Mary accepts that she cannot reasonably (and with compassion) do everything asked of her. She identifies the areas of her job where she has the freedom to say “no” and she vows to only say “yes” to opportunities that most reflect her interests and values.

Learning to say “no” compassionately (see compassionate boundary section) especially in a profession or work culture where we might be expected to say “yes” (see expectations section), is imperative to maintaining resilience in this sector of the compass.

If you struggle with taking on too much, you may benefit from learning more about the benefits of saying “no” and how to do so compassionately.

To learn more about how to “organize your brain, your time, your workspace, and your projects”, check out the following blog.

The mind area of the wellness compass also suggests that we have a strong need to do meaningful work that engages our individual gifts and skills. In “Mindsets,” Dr. Carol Dweck (2016) shows that it is not just our abilities and talents that bring us success as providers, but whether we approach our work with a fixed or growth mindset. People with fixed mindsets believe qualities are etched in stone and that abilities are fixed. This mindset often leads to people feeling deficient or incompetent when faced with difficult situations. When we feel a lack of competence, we may retreat from the challenge before us and become judgmental. For example, in a fixed mindset, if we are challenged by the complex needs of a client that we do not feel competent to address, we may retreat from engagement with that client. In the process, we might blame ourselves and/or the client (see expectations section). Thus, our lack of a sense of competence can leave us in a place of compassion fatigue for that client.

In contrast, people with a growth mindset believe that abilities can be developed through practice and effort. Our skills and talents are not predetermined; therefore, people with growth mindsets stretch themselves to learn new things and believe themselves capable of learning through experience. These people are more resilient in the face of setbacks. In a growth mindset, if we experience compassion fatigue, we may view it as an opportunity to grow our compassion resilience!

Finding a level of competence in the face of complex challenges is tough! We benefit from understanding our own growth potential; but, we also benefit from understanding the resilience and strengths of those we serve and those with whom we work. None of us are the sole source of connection, support, or well-being for a client, family or colleague. And, all clients, families, and colleagues have internal strengths that can be accessed to move them closer to the lives they desire. Many of the activities in this section invite us to recognize our own strengths and competencies and to celebrate the skills and strengths of those with whom we work.
The Compass Wellness Practices Assessment

“Self-care is not an indulgence. Self-care is a discipline. It requires tough-mindedness, a deep and personal understanding of your priorities, and a respect for both yourself and the people you choose to spend your life with.” — Tami Forman

The following worksheet for assessing wellness practices is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days. When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, “I would never do that”? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 = I barely or rarely do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 = I never do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A = doesn’t apply or it’s not of interest to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>? = This never occurred to me. I might be interested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationships**
- Practice self-compassion
- Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- If relevant, schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- If relevant, schedule regular activities with my children
- Stay in contact with important people in my life
- If relevant, spend time with my companion animals
- Make time to reply to personal emails/letters; send holiday cards
- Allow others to do things for me
- Enlarge my social circle
- Ask for help when I need it
- Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- Other:

**Emotions**
- Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- Love myself
- Practice being present
- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- Seek out comforting activities, objects, people, and places
- Allow myself to cry
- Find things that make me laugh
- Notice my inner experience – listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- Use emotional regulation strategies
- Other:
## Wellness and Resilience Strategies: Mind

### Core Values
- Identify what is meaningful and notice its place in my life
- Find a connection/community that shares my values
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read inspirational books or listen to inspirational talks/music
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be open to inspiration
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Be open to not knowing
- Be curious
- Other:

### Rest & Play
- Strive for balance within my work and non-work life
- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in nature
- Sing
- Meditate
- Dance, swim, walk/run, play sports, or other physical activities
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Other:

### Stress Resilience
- Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- Make time for self-reflection
- Have my own personal therapy
- Write in a journal
- Read about things that are unrelated to work
- Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- Learn something new
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other:

### Care for Body
- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages (professional or other)
- If relevant, take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes I like
- Other:
### MIND

#### School/Work
- ___ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- ___ Have intentional conversations with co-workers
- ___ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- ___ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- ___ Set limits/boundaries with students and colleagues
- ___ Balance work so that no one day or part of a day is “too much”
- ___ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- ___ Get regular supervision or consultation
- ___ Negotiate for my needs
- ___ Have a peer support group
- ___ Other:

#### Organization
- ___ Make a budget for how I plan to spend and save money
- ___ Keep track of how I spend my money
- ___ Use a calendar to plan my day, week, month, year
- ___ Prioritize how I spend my time
- ___ Arrange my living space so it is comfortable and comforting
- ___ Accomplish the tasks I plan to for myself each day
- ___ Other:

#### Overall Balance
- ___ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

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