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Burnout Is Real!: Implementing a Wellness Group Model for Research Staff

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Keywords

Burnout, wellness, health, research

Abstract

Purpose

Despite many scholarly strides made towards understanding suicidal ideation and suicidal self-directed violence, little research has been done on how this work affects research staff interacting or interfacing with at-risk participants. Burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma affect the well-being of healthcare and research staff across mental health and healthcare fields. While the hardships of studying difficult topics go unseen, and untreated, research staff are at risk of increased mental health distress and turnover. In this presentation, we will review a model intended to increase wellness and coping among study staff working in difficult research topics such as suicide, high mortality and chronic illness, and death.

Objectives

1) Introduce relevant literature regarding work-related stress in suicide-prevention; 2) Describe unique and shared challenges across different research and healthcare roles; 3) Present several strategies currently being implemented to inform tailored stress management programming.

Description

Investigators at the VAPORHCS developed an intervention model, a staff wellness group, to bolster coping and support among research staff who are at risk of burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. The model aims to 1) incorporate safety procedures into study protocols, 2) brief all staff on safety procedures, 3) conduct staff wellness groups, and 4) debrief with facilitators of the wellness groups. For this presentation, we will largely focus on conducting a staff wellness group and report our own experiences participating in a group. Jason Chen, PhD will present on the development and application of a model for wellness among research staff. Kyla Tompkins, MA will review applied experience of implementing burnout prevention strategies as a non-clinician/research staff person.