

Stress Management

Background Notes

Child welfare work is extremely stressful due to the multiple demands and the trauma involved in the work. Having a plan in place prior to experiencing stress will be helpful in avoiding burnout and being effective with clients. Not only will you experience stress due to the demands of the workload but your clients will bring their stress with them and this can cause secondary traumatic stress. The symptoms are usually less severe than PTSD symptoms experienced by direct victims in a disaster but they can affect the livelihoods and careers of those with considerable training and experience.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Take the stress-busting test to see how stressed out you are.
<http://www.stressbusting.co.uk/take-the-test/>
- Go to David Baldwin's web page on stress reduction strategies or find them in the appendix. <http://www.trauma-pages.com/s/strmantd.php>
- Meet with your Supervisor and learn about the following:
What is an average caseload? What does the office expect in regards to overtime? How can you get help with prioritization when overwhelmed? What can you do if you have a case that is emotionally overwhelming?
- What is available for training; what are the expectations regarding ongoing training?
- Identify two strategies you can use on a regular basis to deal with stress prior to becoming burned out.
- Talk to two coworkers about healthy ways they handle the stress of the job. Identify resources in the office to talk with when feeling stressed.

Discoveries:

- *What are the best coping strategies you gained from talking with your coworkers?*
- *What two strategies will you have in place immediately?*
- *What areas seem to be particularly stressful in your environment and do you have ideas about how you can minimize the negative impact of these on yourself?*