Preventing PDO Burnout

Lori Conlan, OITE/NIH
Garth Fowler, APA
What Is Burn Out?

- Physical and Emotional exhaustion, Decreased sense of personal accomplishment, & Tendency to evaluate own work negatively
  - “Performance Protection”  
    (Rzeszutek & Schier)
- Impaired Mood and Action
  (Meijan & Mulder)
- Resource Exhaustion
- Degradation to empathize with client
  (Lawson)
Why are we burning out?

- Challenges of obtaining, retaining & protecting resources
- Lack of control
- Unclear job expectations
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamics
- Mismatch in values
- Poor job fit
- Extremes of activity
- Lack of social support
- Work-life imbalance

From MayoClinic.org
Parallels from counseling field

- Lack of segmentation
  - “Taking your work home”
- Compassion and empathy towards others
  - Emotional time in our postdocs lives, we can get wrapped up
  - Our clients do not “age”
  - Same problems, new clients
  - Can lead to compassion fatigue
    - Exposure to suffering clients and the inability to rescue them (Charles Figley)
Self Care Techniques

- Psychological Detachment
  - Going home does not mean ‘leaving work’
  - Establish and protect leisure time

- Relaxation
  - Low activation & increased positive affect

- Non-work Mastery
  - Off-work activities that require effort and are personally rewarding
  - Employs psychological detachment
  - Develops competencies & transferable skills
Self Care Techniques

- Mindfulness
  - Focused consciousness of self & surroundings
  - Those that naturally engage in mindfulness show lower stress levels and faster recovery
  - Psychology & Nursing students taught mindfulness skills showed reduced stress and illness

- Segmentation
  - Process of separating differing demands and tasks

- Social Support
  - Outside of work = psychological detachment
  - Inside of work = recruiting resources & assistance
Action for you

- In tables discuss:
  - Protecting Resources at work & Gaining Support
    - Could you expand your office portfolio
    - How to increase your visibility internal/external
  - Strategies to increase psychological detachment & segmentation?
  - Asses your skills/knowledge/abilities/expectations
    - What professional development for you would help
    - What SKAs do you overuse/underuse
Learning to ask for help

- Everyone needs help
- Likely to make the next step you WILL need help
- Learning to ask is doable

---Who will help me plan a job fair?
Reciprocity Ring

- Created by Humax
  - Allows you to learn how to ask, how to clarify AND give help to each other
  - 1. you each can ask for 2 things (put on sticky)
  - 2. group will help you clarify your request
  - 3. add your sticky to the wall with your name on it
  - 4. at the end, go to the wall and give help on a sticky (draw a line from your sticky to theirs)