Hope Though the Holes: Finding Strength in a Flawed Behavioral Health System

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Learning Objectives

1

Identify effective models and strategies for fostering resilience in frontline workers addressing homelessness, mental health, and substance use.

2

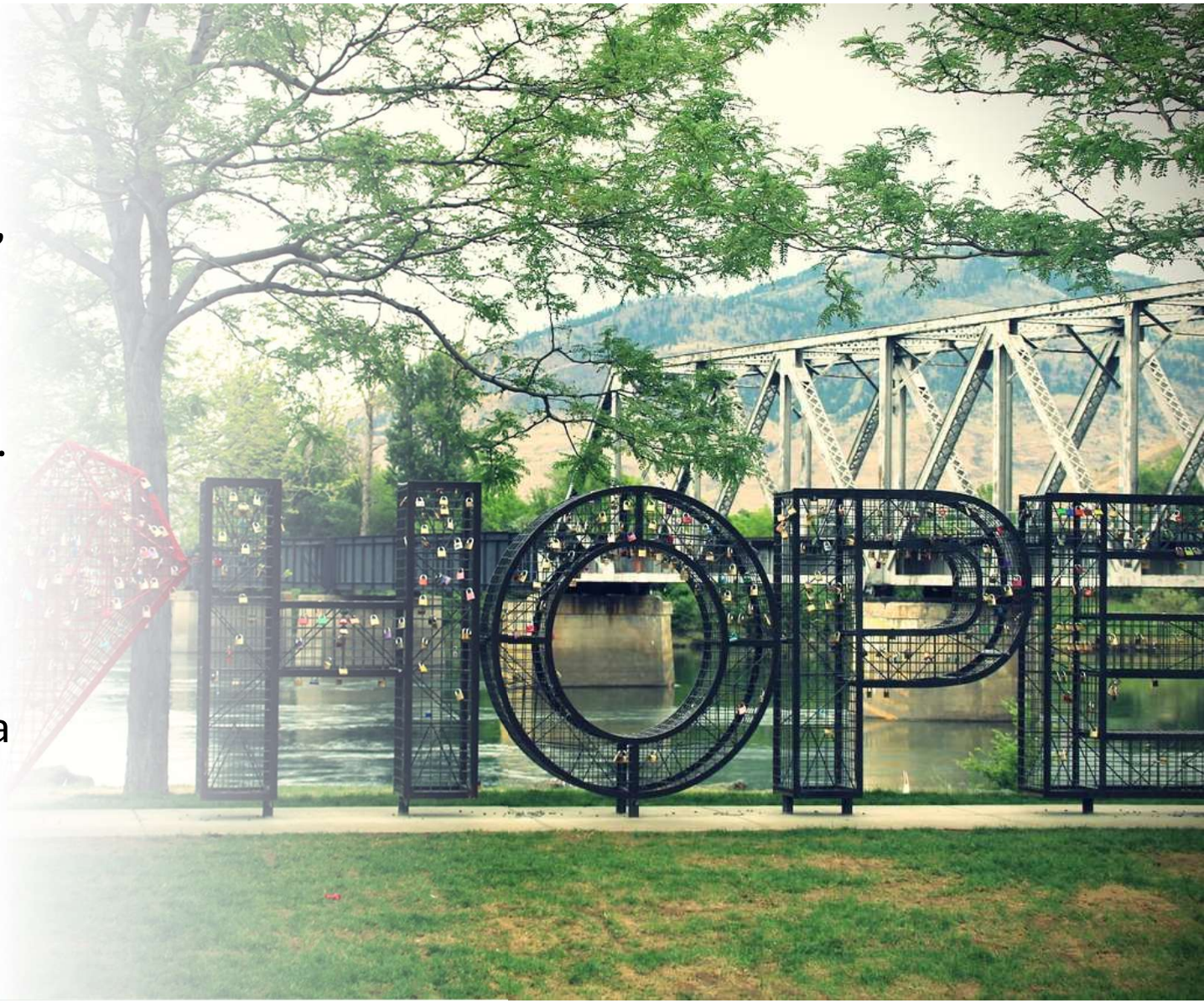
Understand techniques for processing grief in the context of high-stress and emotionally demanding environments.

3

Apply practical approaches tailored to the unique challenges of frontline work in the Pacific Northwest, integrating resilience-building and grief-metabolizing practices into daily operations.

Resilience

- Resilience is a process, not a trait.
- Resilience isn’t bouncing back and ignoring dark emotions.
- Resilience involves leveraging protective factors, not having a perfect life.
- Resilience happens in a community. (Kross, 2023)



Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown

Only when we label the experience or emotion correctly can we work through it.

Navigating broken systems

Busy: Our skills and talents are fully in use and helping us achieve our why.

Stress: Environmental demand is beyond our ability to cope.

Overwhelmed: Our lives are unfolding faster than the human nervous system and psyche are able to manage well.

Resiliency Models, Frameworks, and Ideas

Multi-systems model of resilience (MSMR) layers our core resilience onto internal resilience onto external resilience.

Growth Mindset in the workplace supports culture of continuous improvement, resilience, and innovation.

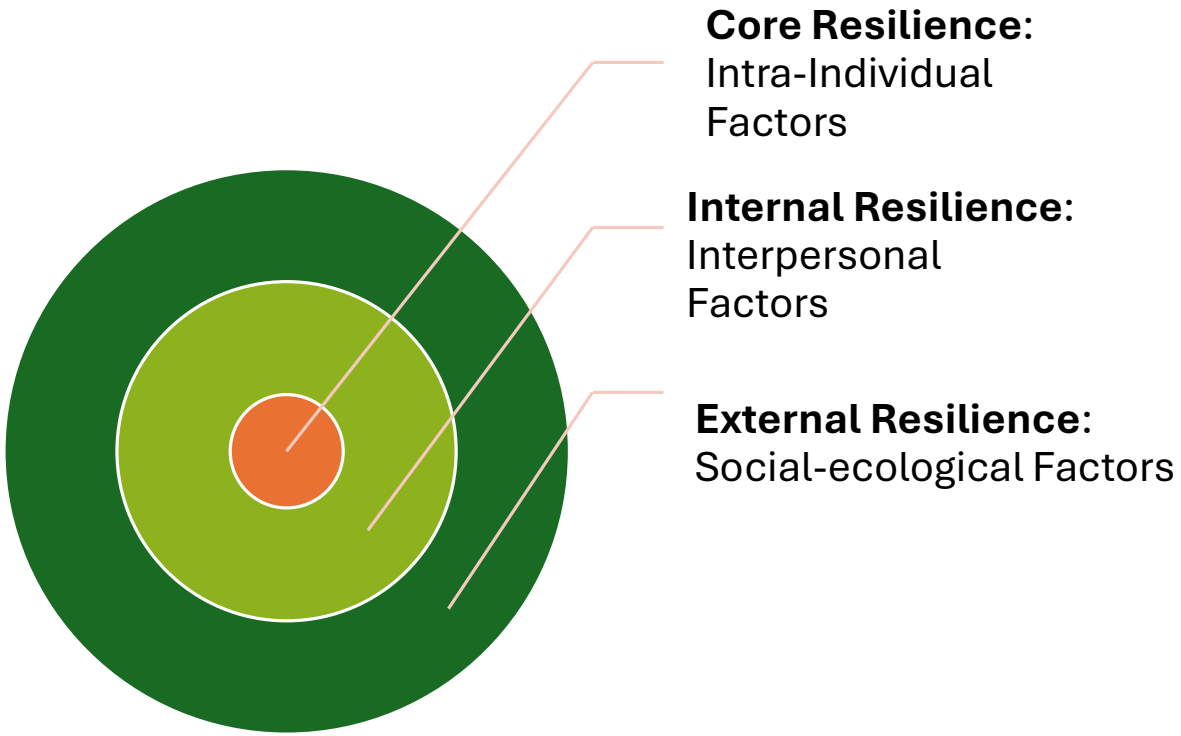
Psychosocial Resilience focuses on resilient identity developing our sense of purpose distress management.

G.R.O.S.S getting rid of stupid stuff, how organizational clutter impacts our functioning at work.

Growth Mindset: Action Items

- **Challenge yourself**: Seek out a new experience or opportunity to push your boundaries. Reflect
- **Invite Feedback**: Ask for constructive criticism, be observant about how you receive it, and practice integration.
- **Process not the prize**: Celebrate the process of our work regardless of the outcome.
- **Encourage yourself**: Replace negative thoughts with statements that reinforce your ability to learn and improve.

Multi-System Model of Resilience: MSMR



MSMR: How that has looked in my life

Core Resilience: Physiological functioning, Epigenetics, biological profiles and health behaviors.
My sleep and forever grapple with self motivated vs group exercise.
Internal Resilience: Variables that can be fostered, developed, and acquired over time from inter-personal sources like chosen family and community.
Finding community in burning man to bring art, immediacy, and inclusiveness to my life.
External Resilience: formal and informal socio-ecological institutions such as geographic location, work environment, and spiritual community.
Using my health benefits for massage, working in a space where I can opt into client care, and living in a home with a garden.

G.R.O.S.S

AMA Steps Forward offers a took like on this concept found here

Focuses on health care settings where we have unintentionally created steps, processes, and work in our day-to-day that contributes to burn-out.

Provides a process and tools to empower front line staff to identify the “stupid stuff” and work collaboratively to address.

Grief Processing

Research shows that naming and acknowledging our sadness is critical to fostering empathy and compassion.

“A central process in grieving is the attempt to reaffirm or reconstruct a world of meaning that has been challenged by loss”

Grief has 3 foundational elements as a nonlinear process of many emotions.

Grief Proccessing

Grief has 3 foundational elements as a nonlinear process of many emotions.

- Loss – of normality, of a living being, or of what we thought we knew
- Longing – involuntary yearning for meaning, to regain what as been lost, or for meaning.
- Feeling lost – grief requires that we reorient our world.

Practical approaches to grief

Whose job is it to get water and food?

How does your team communicate about death and loss?

What is your predictable trauma response?

Do you have regular practice of honoring the work?

Story sharing/writing

Paper cranes

Processes: Debriefings

Trauma Informed Critical Incident Debriefing

This training focuses on leading a debriefing process that is dynamic, embodied, and regulatory.

Activate Resiliency

Andrew Laue LCSW

Boundaries

“Boundaries are a prerequisite for compassion and empathy. We can’t connect with someone unless we’re clear on where we end and they begin.” Brene Brown

“Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously” Prentis Hemphill

“We need hope like we need air”

Hope is not a feeling

Hope is a way of thinking

According to researchers we experience hope when:

We can set realistic **goals**

We can figure out ways to achieve those through **flexibility** and alternative pathways

We have **agency** – we believe in ourselves

"Atlas of the Heart" by Brene Brown

Self-Care: What brings you joy?

We are working with traumatized folks, in a traumatized system

ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life) Measure