

Self-Care Meets Collective Care

Supporting Our Participants, Our Colleagues, and
Ourselves

Presented by Jessica Kalvig

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Who am I, and why am I here?

- Personal experience while growing up
- Studied cultural anthropology and carry that with me
- Year of working as a case manager
- Personal experience with my therapist

Two Challenging Interactions

What are two recent, or two standout interactions with a participant or colleague that left you feeling burnt out?

Choose interactions that are safe to share!

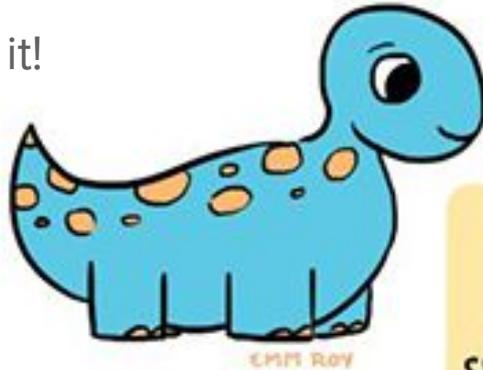
What does the term “collective care” bring up for you?

How is it different from self-care, if at all?

Self-Care, Burnout, and “Compassion Fatigue”

My two cents on self-care

I'm not here to tell you not to do it!



SELF-CARE IS NOT
LAZY OR SELFISH.
SELF-CARE IS HEALTHY.
SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT.
SELF-CARE IS NECESSARY.

However,

Self-care is more than individual acts of care we do, it is **how we do our work**

**What do burnout and
compassion fatigue look like**

**How about energy around the
office when colleagues are burnt
out or fatigued**

Where does “burnout” really come from?

Participant-Provider Interactions?

“Burnout is constructed as an individual problem with individual workers- whether we are tough enough for this work or not, and it’s backed up by ideas that clients hurt us...

...burnout denies that it’s social structures of inequity and social injustice that harm all of us”

Or is it something else?

- I’m not getting supervision
- My supervisor is so stressed, they’re spread thin and unable to support me
 - You can’t live on welfare
- Your medicaid isn’t covering that specialist you need to see
- Even with my help/the agencies help, you are still struggling and there is not much I can do about it

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“Compassion fatigue” is a myth!

- Compassion is not finite
- Language that implies providing compassion makes us exhausted is harmful to those we interact with, and ourselves
- Vulnerability, compassion, and empathy are inter-related and we cannot be empathetic with our participants without practicing compassion with them as much as possible
- The vulnerability is the exhausting part, because it's difficult and scary to do!



**“Compassion is recognizing the light and dark
in our shared humanity. We commit to
practicing loving-kindness with ourselves and
others in the face of suffering”**



- Brené Brown, researcher and social worker

Why is this important?

- Understanding our feelings of burnout and where those feelings actually come from can help us work towards navigating challenging interactions with a greater sense of ease and less of those “burnout” type feelings
- No amount of self-care will remove the injustices that we face together in this work
- We have to lean into each other, remember the greater struggle, and practice compassion at all times!

Values, Unconditional Positive Regard,
and Assuming People Are Doing Their
Best

Identifying Our Values

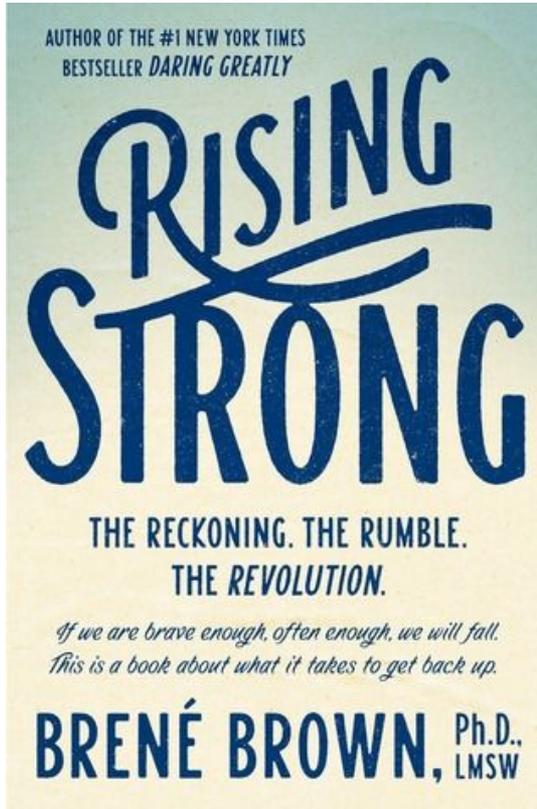
Think of your hero! Someone you look up to. What qualities and traits do they possess? How do they act?



Unconditional Positive Regard

- The belief that all human beings have the resources within them for personal growth, and that cultivating a space of genuine acceptance (regardless of whatever actions or thoughts are taking place) is the best way to enable and encourage that ability to grow
- Seeing a person as inherently worthy of acceptance and love
- Unconditional positive regard is harm reduction!

Assuming People Are Doing Their Best



- Better for our participants
- Better for our colleagues
- Better for ourselves!
- Directly tied to self-compassion
- NO downside!

“What boundaries do I need to put in place so I can work from a place of integrity and extend the most generous interpretations of the intentions, words, and actions of others? ”

- Brené Brown, *Rising Strong*

Collective Accountability Is Collective Care

Be Brave, Be Kind

My personal motto: Be Brave, Be Kind

- When it comes down to it, I always return to this
- Reach out to colleagues who are frustrated or showing signs of burnout
- Speak up when things don't seem right in the work space
- Be vulnerable, remember the shared struggle
- Do these things with genuine kindness and compassion

Overview

- Individual self-care IS important! But not the entire conversation
- Question where burnout comes from, and notion of “compassion fatigue”
- Utilize the framework:
 - 1) identify values
 - 2) maintain unconditional positive regard
 - 3) assume people are doing their best
 - 4) set and adhere to boundaries to stay in your integrity
- Be Brave, Be Kind

Two Challenging Interactions

Ask yourself:

What are my values?

What assumptions was/am I making?

What boundaries did/do I have in place?

Was I maintaining unconditional positive regard?

Our best work is done
when we find that sweet
spot where **self-care** meets
collective care.

Thank you!

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References

- Vikki Reynolds, numerous presentations on the topic
- Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*
- Brené Brown, *Rising Strong*
- Compassion fatigue: A meta-narrative review of the healthcare literature-
International Journal of Nursing Studies