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## PREVENTION

### Session 12: Self-care for violence prevention helpers

#### Materials for this session<sup>42</sup>

- Sign-in sheet
- Participant Manual, one for each participant  
OR copy of Module 12 for each participant (Manual pages 144-154)
- Trainer Notes
- PowerPoint
- Prepared flipchart for *Brainstorming* activity
- Handouts
- Participant Evaluation forms
- Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1

#### Key points in Module 12

##### *Why self-care for helpers?*

- We all need to have some degree of stress in our lives to be functional.
- Stress can help us set goals, complete work and structure our days.
- It is when stress becomes distress that problems arise.
- Working with older persons who live with violence can be very stressful.

##### *Definitions revisited*

- *Stress*: the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response.
- *Burnout*: a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion caused by extreme and prolonged stress.

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<sup>42</sup> See pages 28-29 in this Guide for a Training Checklist and a list of materials, supplies and equipment for each training session.

- *Vicarious trauma*: the negative changes that happen to helping professionals, volunteers and others over time that result from empathetic dealings with clients and victims and hearing or seeing their traumatic experiences.

### ***Vicarious trauma***

- Both burnout and vicarious trauma can occur when you are witness to violence, human suffering and stories of unkindness and loss on a regular basis.
- You may witness the suffering of people you care for or feel responsible to help.
- Vicarious trauma happens *because you care*: you empathize with people who are hurting.
- Empathy is the ability to identify with another person, to understand and feel another person's pain and joy.

### ***Minimizing vicarious trauma requires***

- Being aware of our own thoughts and behaviours;
- Reflecting on our beliefs, values and assumptions; and
- Being willing to share our vulnerability with people who support us.

### ***Recognizing stress***

- No two people who work with older victims of violence respond the same way to the stresses and challenges of this work.
- You may experience changes in:
  - How you see yourself and the world;
  - Your emotional beliefs and needs;
  - Self-care and behaviour (psychological and physiological signs and symptoms);
  - Relationships; and,
  - Beliefs about spirituality, meaning, purpose.
- These changes may be serious warning signs that you are over your stress limit, and need to take care of yourself.

- If you experience any of these changes and they are worrisome, consider seeing a physician or mental health professional.

### ***ABCs of healthy self-care***

Healthy self-care can renew our bodies, hearts, minds and spirits. It can help us become more resilient. Self-care is most effective when approached proactively, not reactively. Think of self-care as having three basic aspects: Awareness, Balance and Connection — the ABC's of self-care.

- ***Awareness***
  - The sooner you notice that something is troubling you, the less likely it is to develop into a much bigger problem.
  - Helpers need to take time to self-reflect.
  - Journal writing, therapy and talking with a supervisor or friend are examples of good habits that build self-awareness.
- ***Balance***
  - Awareness must be balanced with action.
  - Effective self-care involves finding and keeping the right balance for yourself as often as you can.
  - Balance guides your choices about taking on certain activities, behaviours or attitudes. Balance informs how you nurture and align the physical, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of your being.
  - It relates to how much time you spend working, playing and resting.
  - This means balancing demanding work with less challenging work. It means balancing work with the rest of your life.
- ***Connection***
  - Healthy self-care involves being connected in meaningful ways with others and to something beyond ourselves.
  - Social support – connecting meaningfully with people you like and care about – is good for just about everything related to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health.
  - Being connected goes beyond our relationships with other people. This may involve relating to faith, nature, humanity or another source of meaning and purpose.

**PREVENTION**  
**Session 12: Self-care for violence prevention helpers**

**AGENDA**

Activity #	Activity	1.5 Hour session	Materials
1	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome participants.</li> <li>• Introduce yourself if necessary.</li> <li>• Participant introductions, if necessary.</li> <li>• Make housekeeping announcements</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidelines for being together</b> (See some examples on p.14)</p> <p><b>Today's topic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefly explain that this is Session 12 in the <i>Respect Aging</i> training program. Today's topic is <i>Self-care for violence prevention helpers</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Agenda.</li> <li>• If participants do not have their own copies of the Participant Manual, hand out copies of Module 12.</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides 1-2</li> <li>• <i>Participant Manual</i></li> <li>• OR one copy of Module 12 for each participant</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Brainstorming:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the group: <i>Thinking about "work stress", what do you think are some of the signs and symptoms?</i></li> </ul>	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a flipchart ahead of time with four</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On prepared flipchart, enter responses in appropriate columns.</li> </ul>		<p>columns at the top: <i>Physical,</i> <i>Emotional,</i> <i>Mental,</i> <i>Spiritual</i></p>
3	<p><b>Learning together</b> <i>Self-care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show slides.</li> <li>Refer to the Notes on the slides for more information.</li> </ul>	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PowerPoint slides 3-20</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Small group activity</b> <i>Wellness Toolbox</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hand out <i>Wellness Toolbox</i> and <i>Personal Wellness Toolbox</i>.</li> </ul>	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PowerPoint slides 21-22</li> <li>Handouts</li> <li>Flipchart</li> <li>Markers</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Wrap-up / Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i> and ask participants to complete them.</li> <li>Hand out <i>Questions to Ask in Times of Stress</i>. Tell participants that this is for their own personal use.</li> <li>Do a final go-round. Ask participants to briefly share how the session was for them, and how they will use what they have learned in their work or interactions with older persons.</li> <li>Thank participants once again for their input, sharing and time.</li> <li>Collect <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i>.</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Participant Evaluation Forms</i></li> <li>Handout</li> </ul>

<i>Total time</i>	<b>90 minutes</b>
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**IMPORTANT!**

After facilitating this session, please complete the form titled **Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1** (page 221). Your feedback will help us keep project materials relevant, useful and up-to-date. Mail or fax within one week of the session to:

Provincial Training Coordinator  
 Women's Policy Office/Violence Prevention Initiative  
 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Confederation Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, West Block  
 St. John's, NL  
 A1B 4J6

PHONE: (709) 729-5009  
 FAX: (709) 729-1418  
 EMAIL: [vpi@gov.nl.ca](mailto:vpi@gov.nl.ca)

# PREVENTION – SESSION 12 ACTIVITY

#### **Activity 4: Wellness Toolbox**

1. Divide the large group into smaller groups of at least four persons each.
2. Ask each group to appoint a Recorder and a Reporter.
3. Hand out the *Wellness Toolbox* handout to each participant.
4. Tell participants they will be working on their own to fill in as many of the boxes on their personal matrix as they can.
5. Once they have created their own Toolbox, have them work as a group to create a group Toolbox on a flipchart.
6. Bring groups back together. Have each small group report back to the larger group.
7. Tell participants that the *Personal Wellness Toolbox* sheet is for them to write down any new wellness tools they hear about and would like to try. They can also write down any former wellness tools that they would like to start using again. (This is for their own personal use. Participants will not be asked to share this list.)



# PREVENTION – SESSION 12 HANDOUTS



# Wellness Toolbox

	Awareness	Balance	Connection
<b>Physical</b>			
<b>Emotional</b>			
<b>Mental/ Intellectual</b>			
<b>Spiritual</b>			



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## HANDOUT: QUESTIONS TO ASK IN TIMES OF STRESS<sup>43</sup>

1. How am I doing?
2. What do I need? What would I like to change?
3. What is hardest about this work?
4. What worries me most about my work?
5. How have I changed since I began this work? Both for better or worse?
6. What changes, if any, do I see in myself that I do not like?
7. Am I experiencing any signs of stress, burnout or vicarious trauma?
8. What am I doing, and what have I done, to address my vicarious trauma?
9. What is my sense of personal accomplishment in my work?
10. What work barriers get in the way of my having more satisfaction? How can these barriers be addressed?
11. What am I going to do to take care of myself?
12. How can I keep going as a person while working with traumatized older persons?
13. How can I better use my social supports? *[Make a list of your social supports on the job (colleagues) and off the job (family, friends).]*
14. Have I talked to others about my concerns, feelings and rewards of my job?
15. Whom did I talk to (present and past)? How did they react?
16. What did he or she say or do that was helpful or unhelpful?
17. Is there anything about my work or other life stresses that I have not told anyone, that is 'unspeakable', that I have kept to myself (a secret)? *[Try putting it into words, such as, "I haven't shared it because..." or "I am very hesitant to share it because..."]*
18. What is the possible impact or emotional toll of not sharing or working through these feelings?
19. Is there anything about my stress experience that I keep from myself? An area or event that I have pushed away or kept at arm's length from myself?
20. How will sharing these feelings help? *[Remember, what cannot be talked about can never be put to rest.]*

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<sup>43</sup> Adapted in part from:  
Donald Meichenbaum. (no date). *Self-care for Trauma Psychotherapists and Caregivers: Individual, Social and Organizational Interventions*. Retrieved from: [http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/Meichenbaum\\_SelfCare\\_11thconf.pdf](http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/Meichenbaum_SelfCare_11thconf.pdf).