Us

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We cannot and must not fall back on the defense mechanisms that allow others to ignore the realities we bear witness to every day.
There is no “other”

There is only US
If we are to be this open to reality, without falling back on toxic defense mechanisms . . .

We must have strategies and supports that allow us to remain whole while serving youth in a loving way
Something We Who Serve Others Rarely Speak About

Us
How do we define success?
To touch many lives over a lifetime of service and connection with others
We are the role models that... 

Display resilience 

Choose to cope in healthy ways 

Admit vulnerability and personal limits 

Reject stigma 

See strength in seeking help
Burnout Prevention
Stress is usually something people are acutely aware of, whereas burnout can present insidiously.

When you are stressed, you care too much, but when you are burned out, you don’t see any hope of improvement. You are numb.
The Worst thing is not to be stressed . . . it is to be NUMB
Stress

Characterized by over engagement
Emotions are overreactive
Produces urgency and hyperactivity
Loss of energy
Stress

Leads to anxiety disorders
Primary damage is physical
May kill you prematurely
Activated, sometimes paralyzed
Burnout

Characterized by disengagement
Emotions are blunted
Produces helplessness and hopelessness
Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope
Burnout

Leads to detachment and Depression

Primary damage is emotional

May make life seem not worth living
Workplace Factors that lead to burnout:

• Cultures that normalize extending oneself beyond physical, or emotional capacities.
• Cultures that confuse over-functioning with ambitiousness and blur the boundary between professional and personal lives.
• Coercive or punitive rules
• Work that causes you to violate your personal values
Individual Factors that lead to burnout:

- Individuals who have unmet personal needs or have conflicting needs
- Individuals whose self definition is too tightly tied to work
- Setting unrealistic goals for yourself or having them imposed on you
- Being expected to be too many things to too many people
The Universal Factor that may lead to our burnout:

Those who spend their work lives attending to the needs of others, especially if their work puts them in frequent contact with the dark or tragic side of human experience.
What does burnout do to our relationships and work environment?

May make us less likely to engage

May send a message to eager coworkers that they are over-functioning, setting an overall lower standard as part of the “welcoming” or orientation process

May make more energetic coworkers misjudge seasoned colleagues as unfeeling or uncaring, when, in fact, the problem is that they have cared too much
Serving Over a Lifetime
The “Solution” on One Slide
(The premise is ridiculous)

1. Boundaries

2. Knowing (and experiencing) that what we do matters

3. Self-Care
Boundaries

- Not the easy stuff. How do you love and still remain whole?
- Knowing our buttons
- Being trauma-informed
- Knowing who is the expert
- Avoiding the rescue fantasy
- Giving control back
- Planting seeds
Being Trauma Informed is Healing (for Us and Youth)

But focusing on trauma or risk holds the potential to re-traumatize
Knowing (and experiencing) that what we do matters
Who’s the expert?

Who’s the facilitator?

Turning off the lecture

Restoring control to the person who needs it
Self Care: The Greatest Gift You Can Give Those You Serve
“Love is seeing someone as they deserve to be seen, *as they really are*, not through the lens of the behaviors they have sometimes needed to display.”
The importance of **Connection** cannot be overstated. . .

- Family
- Spirituality
- Community
- Mission
Writing a personal mission statement
Finding a Mentor

Being a Mentor
We are not Superman (or Superwoman)
Is balance possible?

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What is High Yield

What is irrepeaceable?

Where are you irrepeaceable?
Do we view our colleagues, and even ourselves, through the same strength-based lens with which we commit to see the young people we serve?
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The Tupperware Box