**Pre-Service Module: Trauma**

**Section 2: Managing the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Professional**

**Section Learning Objectives**

By the end of Section 2: Managing the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Professional, child welfare professionals will be able to:

* Recognize that helping those who experience trauma and suffering has an effect

on your personal life and professional work.

* Become familiar with the concepts of burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress.
* Recognize the importance of self-care to enhance your well-being.
* Develop strategies and tools for building resilience and practicing self-care.

**Section Themes and Key Points**

Below is a summary of the themes and key points covered in this section. This summary is intended to remind learners of the key learning points addressed and assist supervisors/ coaches in understanding what was covered in order for them to guide and support the application of learning for new child welfare professionals related to this section.

1. This section identifies and describes the impact of traumatic stress on the child welfare professional under three main topics:

* **Burnout:** feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or doing the job effectively. Six common causes of burnout in the workplace include:
  + Workload
  + Perceived Lack of Control
  + Recognition
  + Community
  + Fairness
  + Values Mismatch
* **Compassion Fatigue:** the negative aspect of helping those who experience traumatic stress and suffering, which can lead to deep emotional and physical exhaustion. Some may have chosen the helping profession of child welfare because of a personal history of trauma, which can create higher risk to develop compassion fatigue.
* **Secondary Traumatic Stress:** the emotional duress resulting from hearing traumatic stories from the families you work with on a regular basis.

1. This section outlines the similar symptoms of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, which include sleep disturbance, depression/sadness, anger, avoidance, isolation, and hopelessness.
2. This section defines resilience and identifies self-care techniques. Resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that anyone can learn and develop. Higher resilience provides the ability to better adapt positively to stressful working conditions, manage emotional demands, foster effective coping strategies, improve well-being, and enhance professional growth.

Developing resilience is a personal and unique process and there are different strategies for increasing and enhancing the capacity for resilience, including building connections, promoting optimism and using humor.

Self-care is also key to resilience and needs to be part of a daily routine. Habits of self-care can be very simple such as staying hydrated, getting enough sleep and putting limits in place.

Supervisors are a critical resource and can provide feedback about developing habits of resiliency and self-care.

**On-the-Job Application Activities**

Listed in this section are optional transfer of training activities to support the learner in applying the knowledge acquired during the Trauma: Managing the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Professional Pre-Service Module to their CPS roles and responsibilities.

This activity is optional and is provided only to aid the child welfare professional and supervisor/coach in supporting transfer of learning from pre-service to the agency. The child welfare professional, with input from their supervisor/coach, may choose to complete this activity or substitute in other activities.

**Option 1: Taking Care of Yourself Activity**

Our work with families in crisis can lead to compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress. The pace and demands of the work can lead to burnout, but there are strategies to promote and sustain you. It is imperative that child welfare professionals build resilience and practice self-care.

As you have learned, it is critically important to take care of yourself as you assist families with their challenges.

* Use the checklist below to discover what self-care strategies can work for you.
* Consider developing a plan as to how to implement these in your daily routine and discussing your plan with your supervisor or coach

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| **Taking Care of Yourself Activity**  **Putting Yourself First**  Maintain boundaries and be aware of your limitations  Make time for self-reflection  Find things that you enjoy or make you laugh  Participate in formal help if stress persists for greater than 2-3 weeks  Practice faith, philosophy, spirituality  Keep a journal  Increase leisure activities  Spend time with family and friends  Write, draw, paint  **Healthy Habits**  Stay hydrated  Increase exercise  Practice good sleep routines  Limit caffeine and substance use  Pay extra attention to health and nutrition  **Relaxation Techniques**  Mindfulness  Breath Control  Massage  Yoga |