

# Lee Pesky Learning Center

Improving the lives of people with  
learning disabilities



# Self-Care /S Self-Regulation!

Julie M. Meek, LCSW  
Lead Counselor  
Lee Pesky Learning Center



# What is Lee Pesky Learning Center?

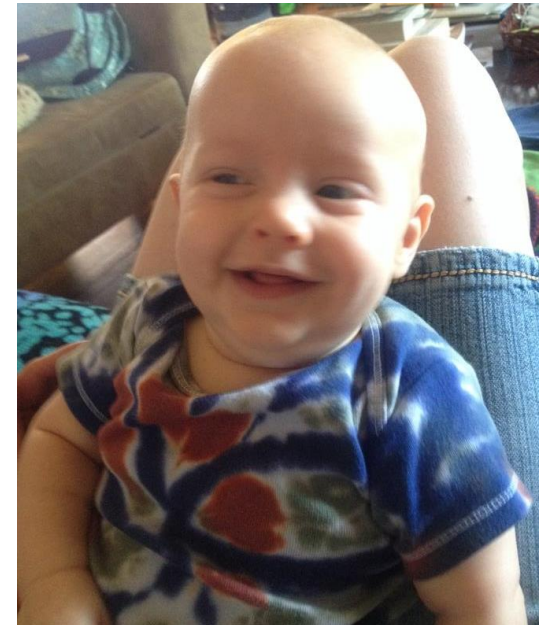
A private, non-profit educational agency

LPLC consists of a multi-disciplinary team of psychologists, teachers, counselors, and researchers. Most of our clients are kindergarten through high school age, although we do evaluate and treat adults.



# Goals for Today

- Define key terms, such as self-care, burnout, compassion fatigue, etc
- Identify your personal self-care strategies and when to use them
- Practice a multitude of strategies together
- RELAX and HAVE FUN 😊





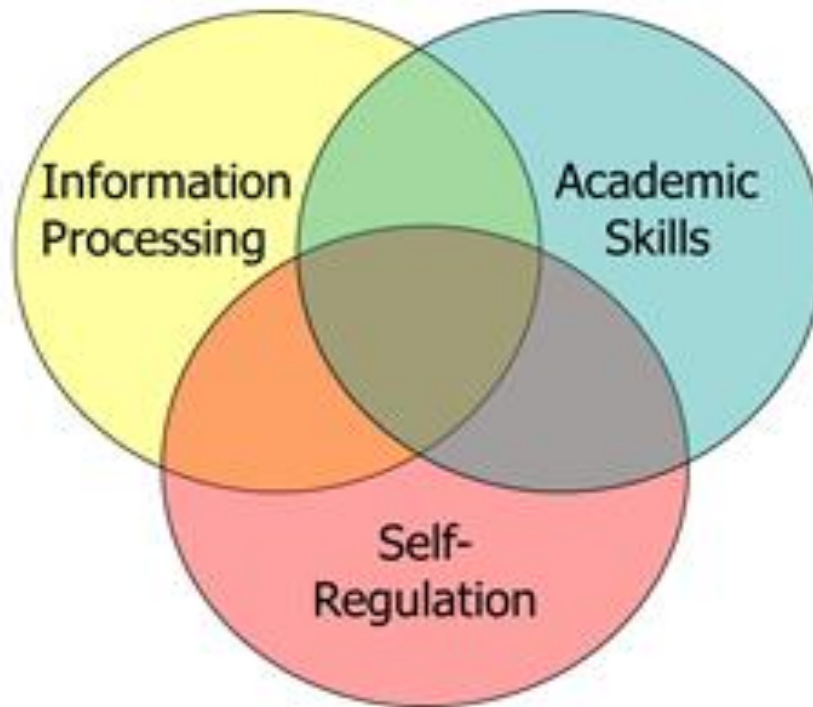
ConsumerHealthDigest  
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# “The Pesky Way”

## Components of the Complex Learner Profile

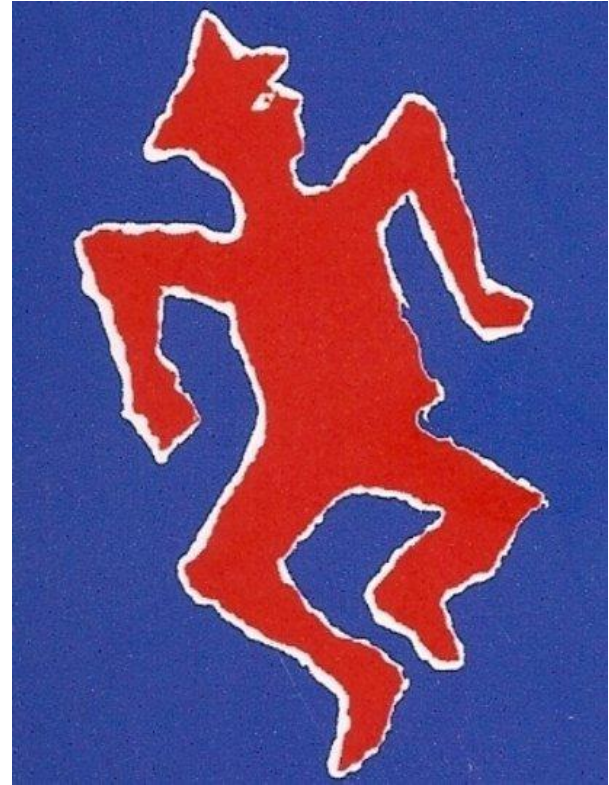


“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.” – The Buddha



# The Catch-22

The very thing that gives workers in the helpful professions the ability to do their work and do it well is the very thing that can make the it most challenging.





# Index card activity

- Write 3 ways that you have been negatively affected by your work – on index card
- Wait for further instructions

*“Those who give light must endure burning.”*

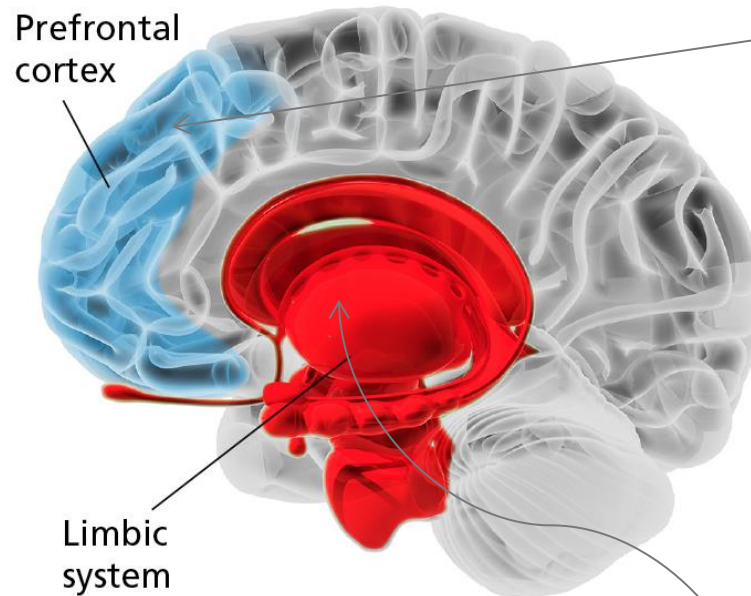
*-Viktor Frankl*

# Statistics

- Rates of burnout and emotional exhaustion among social workers and those in social services is especially high.
- Prolonged burnout/compassion fatigue leads to adverse consequences in the worker and clients including mental and physical illness and poorer client outcomes.
- Studies:
  - 75% of SW suffered from burnout at some point in their careers, with 39% suffering currently (Siebert, 2005)
  - 60% of CPS workers suffered from emotion exhaustion (Anderson 2000)

# Brain Basics

## PFC



- Self-regulation
- Executive functioning
- “Smart, Calm Brain”
- PSNS

Image source: Claus Lunau/Science Source

## Limbic System

- Fight, flight, freeze
- Creates emotions
- “Survival Brain”
- SNS

**The brain can change and  
BUILD better connections  
between these systems!**



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# Burnout/Compassion Fatigue

- “The chronic condition of perceived demands outweighing perceived resources.” (Gentry & Baranowsky, 1998).
- Often defined as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.
- Consists of exhaustion, depersonalization (feeling disengaged or detached from the world), diminished feelings of self-efficacy, reduced tolerance for others’ problems, depression, and increased self-criticism.

# Secondary/Vicarious Trauma

- ST is not the same as burnout or compassion fatigue, though it may express as an exacerbated version of these two.
- ST is said to be “catching the symptoms” of the client, including intrusive images, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, hypervigilance, suspicion of others, high anxiety, numbness, shame, guilt, and inability to experience pleasure.

# Contributing Factors

- Compassion Fatigue/Burnout can be led to by
  - High caseloads
  - High ratio of “crisis” students/clients (suicidal, multiple problems/disabilities, hostile transference, few options for help)
  - Low organizational support
  - Isolation (physical and psychological)
- ST can be led to by
  - Bearing witness to trauma – including stories!
  - A sense of powerlessness that comes from feeling the need to “fix” a student’s/client’s situation that can’t be fixed
  - Exposure to student/client trauma which “triggers” the worker’s own traumatic history

# Compassion Satisfaction

- “Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through what you do at work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society through your work with people who need care.”  
(ProQuol.org)
- CS is something you can intentionally grow and cultivate in yourself and in your organization.





# Contributing Factors

- Compassion Satisfaction can be increased by:
  - Balancing your workload
  - Setting realistic expectations for yourself and your students
  - Balancing your work/play/recharge activities
  - Connecting with and supporting your colleagues
  - Regularly and actively engaging in SELF-CARE

# Talking Point...

- Identify 3 ways/instances when your work has been positive and given back to you
  - Define signs of burnout
  - Brainstorm Self-care strategies





# Self-care Activities



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# Self-care Key Points

- ANY attempt to care for yourself is a good one and is worth doing.
- Do not expect quick-fixes for pervasive problems, but expect to be surprised by the power of an intentional act of self-care to change your thoughts/feelings in the moment.
- ANY (healthy) action taken with the *intention* of self-care *is* self-care!



# Self-care basics

- Remember you are a human creature with basic needs:
  - Safety
  - SLEEP
  - Exercise/movement
  - Real food, water
  - Connection to others
  - Downtime and “pauses” in the day





# Be honest with yourself

- Use a questionnaire (like the ProQOL) to assess yourself repeatedly throughout your career
- Ask loved ones and co-workers for an outsider view of your behavior and well-being – give them permission to approach you with concerns

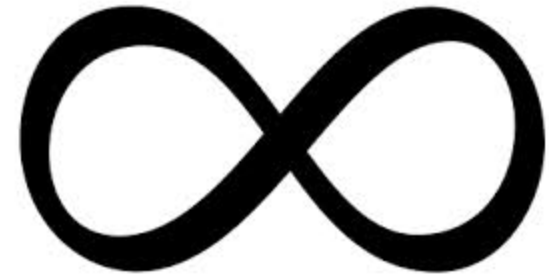


# Breathe... now for a brain break...

## STAR Breathing



## Lazy-8 Breathing



# Mission Statement

- Intentional language is *very* powerful!
- You entered this field *for a very good reason*.
- Writing your personal and professional Mission Statement and living in alignment with it moves your locus of control from *external* to *internal* – making your work a choice, not a demand.
- See handouts for guides

"QUOTESVALLEY.COM"

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*This above all:  
To thine own self,  
be true.*

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*William Shakespeare*



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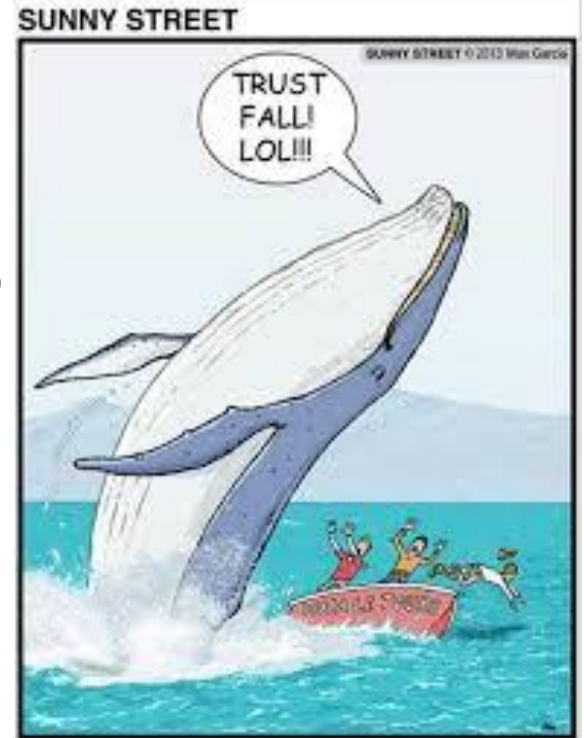
# Creating space-time for Self-Care

- Find “windows” of time in your week for your you-care, as well as large chunks of time that you “protect” from intruding “to-dos” and demands.
- Remember – this work for yourself is as or more important than the work you do for others – as your service to others depends on it!



# The art of delegation

- Learn to delegate and trust that others will do a good job of what you ask.
- You create less work for yourself AND an opportunity for others to grow.
- Exercise your right to ask for help and seek the knowledge of others.



# Transitioning from Work to Home

- What is your transition like? And do you check emails/take calls throughout the evening/weekend?
- Create a ritual -
  - Changing clothes when you get home
  - Singing to your favorite playlist in the car
  - Staying outside in your backyard for a moment before going in



# Cultivating Positivity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR3rK0kZFkg>



Photo source: [www.zazzle.com/goneviralgear](http://www.zazzle.com/goneviralgear)



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# Cultivating Positivity

Realize that happiness is a work ethic. Happiness is not a mystery. You have to train your brain to be positive just like you work out your body. We not only need to work happy, we need to work at being happy.

# The 21-Day Challenge

- Can't decide which self-care activity to choose?

Pick one of these 5 daily habits for 21 days:

- Gratitude Journal
- 2-minute positivity write
- Exercise 10 minutes a day
- Meditate 2 minutes a day
- Write to a coworker/friend/family member each day with a message of gratitude or praise

From Achor, S. "The Happiness Advantage"



# Other Common Ways to Self-care

- Getting into nature –a moment outside, a short walk, or a hike on a the trail
- Mindfulness practice
- Meditation practice
- Engaging in a loved activity:
  - Playing music/singing
  - Yoga
  - Dance
  - Creative arts
  - Writing
  - Going to the gym
  - Reading for pleasure



# Other Common Ways to Self-care (cont.)

- Journaling
- Spiritual Practice
- Researching a favorite topic or professional enrichment
- Gardening, caring for plants
- Time with animals
- Decorating your space/office with loved pictures and items.





# More on Mindfulness

- “Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” Kabat-Zinn (1994)
- Has been shown to significantly reduce stress and increase sense of well-being and happiness.
- Regular practice changes the neuro-circuitry of the brain to support self-regulation.

*“The only opportunity we have for peace and enjoyment in life is right now.”*





# When to seek professional counsel...

- When you are feeling persistent and pervasive signs of anxiety/depression
- If you cannot seem to leave work at home, are working excessive hours on consistent basis
- Work-related stress has been (or has begun) impacting your personal well-being, your family/friends, and/or your clients.



Questions?



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# Resources

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# Thank You!

Lee Pesky Learning Center  
3324 Elder Street • Boise, ID 83705  
208-333-0008

**Julie Meek, LCSW**

jmeek@lplearningcenter.org

[www.LPLearningCenter.org](http://www.LPLearningCenter.org)

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