Social Work and Self Care
Module 9
What is your motivation for entering the Helping Profession?

- Desired to help people
- People tell me I am a good listener
- I want to make a difference in the world
- I was really helped in my own past by a counselor or pastor, and that inspired me to want to help others.
- I have had to work through my own trauma, now I want to help other survivors.
Social Work is an Emotionally Demanding Profession!

- As new MSW students, you may experience a wide range of emotions.
- Starting something new produces STRESS!
- Your agency and client population will likely be a very new environment to you.
- Working with people means dealing with their emotions and problems.
Therefore, it is vital that you:

- Maintain balance in your life (physically, emotionally, spiritually)
- Take care of yourself – don’t neglect yourself!
- Surround yourself with a support system
- Evaluate your priorities
- Connect with your fellow classmates – they know what you’re going through!
- You are also encouraged to seek out your own counseling/therapy as an additional means of support!
Self-Care Survey & Exercise
Compassion Fatigue & Burnout

- **Compassion Fatigue**
  - Negative aspects of working as a helper: less empathy, fatigue, frustration, hopeless, helpless, feeling depleted.

- **Burnout**
  - Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed
  - Symptoms include emotional exhaustion and depersonalization
  - Burnout is measured on five dimensions
    1. Exhaustion, Incompetence, Negative Work Environment, Devaluing Client, Deterioration of Personal life
The Shadow Side of Helping

- Falling into the Messiah Trap
  - Anyone is at risk!
- According to Berry (2003), Messiahs take on seven different styles:
  1. Pleaser
  2. Giver
  3. Protector
  4. Rescuer
  5. Counselor
  6. Teacher
  7. Crusader

- We each may be likely have a bit of these characteristics, but should be aware of risks...
The Shadow Side of Helping

Be aware that all seven styles can be:
- Help-aholics
- Susceptible to becoming overextended and overinvested in others

They often lack the ability to:
- Set limits on time, energy, and resources

They feel driven to:
- Be all things to everyone
- Be responsible to meet everyone’s needs

Their lifestyle of caring has:
- Left them feeling alone, distraught, and deprived
Preventing Burn-out

- Mindfulness and reflection
- Debriefing and processing feelings with supervisor and peers
- Focusing on client success stories
- Developing resiliency through compassion satisfaction
- Spirituality
Rewards of helping

- **Compassion Satisfaction**
  - Positive aspects of working as a helper: pleasure derived from helping, contributing to growth in others, meaningful connections, seeing positive change in people.

- Research shows the Compassion Satisfaction helps to mitigate effects of Burn-out.

Humor is a healthy form of coping!

- Check out friedsocialworker.com

- Need a smile? Check our humor page.
Faith Integration

Personal & Professional Practice

MODULE 10
What is faith integration?

- **What it is:**
  - Demonstrating your faith through actions
  - Modeling your beliefs
  - ?
  - ?
  - ?

- **What it is not:**
  - Sharing your faith openly with agency staff and clients
  - Trying to convert others at your agency
  - ?
  - ?
  - ?
Integration of Faith: Multiple Aspects to Consider

Approaching Religion & Spirituality

- Personal Values
- Professional Practice & Code of Ethics
- Agency Policy & Culture
- State and Federal Laws
Cultural and Religious Competency

Social Work Code of Ethics

- The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has also acknowledged the necessity of cultural and religious competency.

- “Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients’ cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients’ cultures.

- Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability. (NASW Code of Ethics)
Azusa Pacific MSW Program: 
Faith Integration Competency

SLO 11 (EPAS 2.1.11)
Articulate how Christian beliefs and values can be ethically integrated in professional social work practice.

- Applies Christian beliefs and values, as appropriate to client needs, in an ethical manner.
- Integrates faith-based interventions as applicable to practice contexts.
- Integrates clients’ religious, spiritual, and faith traditions and/or faith communities, as indicated, to enhance coping.
- Understands the contributions and capacity of faith-based organizations and churches as resources in the delivery of social services.
Azusa Pacific University

Statement of mission and purpose for Azusa Pacific University:

- "Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life."

- Belief in Christ is central to all that we think and do, and who we are. It is this understanding of God's love that informs all our pursuits: academic, service, and community.
According to a **2012 Pew Research Center study**, nearly 80 percent of Americans say they practice some type of religion, while approximately 20 percent say they do not.

Empirical studies of many groups dealing with major life stressors such as natural disaster, illness, loss of loved ones, divorce and serious mental illness show that religion and spirituality are generally helpful to people in coping, especially people with the fewest resources facing the most uncontrollable of problems (**Dr. Pargament, APA 2013**).

Research recommends mental health professionals maintain awareness of one’s own beliefs and biases regarding religion/spirituality, in order to help avoid imposing their own values on their clients.
Social Work Best Practice

“...Health and social care practitioners are beginning to investigate how tapping into religious or spiritual beliefs can contribute to helping individuals deal with serious health and social issues over the life course”
(Canda 1989, MacKinlay, 2001; Fallon, 2001, Purnell and Paulanka, 2003; Sue, 2006; Cox et al., 2007, as quoted in Furness & Gilligan, 2010).

“Social work aims to demonstrate respect for all communities and groups and to work in equal partnerships with people, rather than imposing values on them.”
(Furness & Gilligan, 2010)
Practice Question

- Are you sufficiently self-aware and reflexive about your own religious and spiritual beliefs or the absence of them and your responses to others?
Bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment

Example of FICA Assessment Tool

- **F – Faith and Belief**
  - Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious?" or "Do you have spiritual beliefs that help you cope with stress?"

- **I – Importance**
  - "What importance does your faith or belief have in your life? Have your beliefs influenced how you take care of yourself in this illness? What role do your beliefs play in regaining your health?"

- **C – Community**
  - "Are you part of a spiritual or religious community? Is this of support to you and how? Is there a group of people you really love or who are important to you?"

- **A – Address in Care**
  - "How would you like us to address these issues in your treatment?"

Personal Aspect: Group Discussion

- At What type of agency will you be interning?
- What are your expectations for integrating your personal faith in field?
- How important is your faith and professional identity?
- How would you honor your faith identity while maintaining good boundaries with your agency and clients?
Professional Boundaries

- Always start where the client is at, seek to understand their values, cultural & religious traditions and worldview.
- Giving religious advice, preaching to, or evangelizing clients is outside the scope of most social worker’s professional role and expertise, and risks exploitation of the therapeutic relationship:
- The *Code of Ethics* states, “Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political or business interests” (p. 9).