

# Questions Asked During Live Webinar Broadcast on August 8, 2018



## *Authentic Self-Care for Addiction Professionals*

Presenter: Cary Hopkins-Eyles

**Thank you for this! One of my previous supervisors had told me to buy an elementary school math book. He said that a change from emotional to logic helped give your emotions time to cool for a while. Comments?**

A: There is value in finding balance of course. However, I would suggest that rather than switching from emotions to logic, we strengthen our empathy skills. When we are truly being empathetic with others, we don't get too emotionally attached and we keep a healthy boundary while also showing care and kindness.

**Do you think that age is a contributing factor in taking care of yourself? At age 50, I found that self-care started to move up my list of daily things to do and my priorities changed.**

A: Absolutely! I would love us to understand this earlier in life but I agree that priorities can shift as we get older. I think it relates in some ways to what I mentioned in the webinar – that certain things “whisper” to us (body aches, inspirations, goals) and if we ignore them they begin to scream (perhaps resulting in pain, mid-life crises, etc). I am glad it is more of a priority for you!

**Regarding not showing a sense of urgency, I find that clients tend to mirror what they see and if what they see is a stressed counsellor, then I find that the ability to reach my goal of helping my clients to understand what is going on in their lives and how to manage the stress is lost. As a past manager, I would make it a positive note to tell my workers that they are mirroring a positive attitude and coping skills to their clients. Comments?**

A: I completely agree with this. I never thought it was helpful for myself or my staff to stomp through the facility showing clients how busy and stressed they were. How do you then redirect clients who act the same way?

**What interventions did you find to be more effective in regard to fostering self-care?**

A: It takes a lot of practice. We have to change our mindset certainly but in some ways it is better to just push ourselves to begin self-care and start to see how it feels. The benefits make us want to do it more and it can snowball in a really positive way. I think we also need to make commitments. Sign up for that yoga class online so you will be less likely to back out. Tell a friend you will meet them for coffee. Commit to some self-care and then do it!

**Sounds like the "freeze response" to toxic stress. Comments?**

A: Yes, our flight-fight-freeze responses are triggered too much in our fast paced society and in our field. That is why things like deep breathing or other cortisol reducing activities are so important. To get us back to a sense of safety and health.

**I had a supervisor once who said I did not have a "sense of urgency" She was right, but she was seeing it as a deficit. How do you respond to something like that?**

A: I would suggest that (1) we don't want to model urgency (if really urgency here is code for stress) and (2) I would look at productivity. If I can get my work done and be part of the team, why do I have to “appear urgent”. We have to be careful not to glorify the culture of busy-ness and stress.

**How would you go by telling your supervisor that you are having a mental meltdown and need time off without looking like you can't handle the position?**

A: I would first make sure you have accessed your resources. Does the agency/organization have EAP (Employee Assistance Programs)? Does your insurance have behavioral health coverage or other self-care resources (i.e., therapy, exercise classes, stress reduction materials)? As a supervisor I would want to know you were using your resources and problem solving. But ultimately if you need time off, you cannot worry about how your supervisor sees you. You have to take care of you and figure out Plan B if that job doesn't work out.

**I have noticed a difference in how women and men do self care. Women are often told they do not need to do**

A: I haven't had this experience per se although there are some cultures where I could see that happening. In my yoga classes for example, it is predominantly women. For me as a self-care promoter, I would just bring it back to the fact that we all need self-care and it will be as unique and individualized as each of us are.

Thank you so much for participating!! 😊