

Questions Asked During Live Webinar Broadcast on 06/14/2017



Self-Care for Addiction Professionals: Why It Counts and How to Do It

Presenters: David Mee-Lee and Deborah Teplow

Can you tell us how to access the interactive journaling again?

A: Go to www.changecompanies.net. Here is a link to more on Interactive Journaling:

<https://www.changecompanies.net/interactivejournaling/>

You can also see a few pages of each of about 200 different journals at The Change Companies website.

How do you recommend talking to your organization's President / CEO about the culture? P.S: I'm far down in the career ladder.

A: I suggest you put this on the agenda for a staff meeting and get some consensus of the staff team as a whole rather than you alone approaching the President/CEO. Then it comes up as a grass-roots team concern that can "rise to the top" through the channels of staff team, supervisors and middle management to the CEO.

Another idea is to use an established model for organizational change to support your discussion, keep it focused and purposeful, and guide it toward outcomes that benefit individuals and the common good.

Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD, is Vice Provost for Institutional Culture and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Miami, and has written extensively about cultural transformation in organizations and communities. He also offers several models for personal, organizational, and community culture change.

An important point he makes in his book, *Promoting Well-Being: Linking Personal, Organizational, and Community Change* (2006) is that values, interests, and power (VIPs) are key sources of organizational well-being, and are present and active in all interactions. Therefore, it's crucial to attend to and manage them. *Values* refer to "morally desirable" outcomes and processes that produce both personal and collective well-being. *Interests* define individuals' personal goals that confer benefit to the individual without accounting for the consequences for the collective. *Power* is the capacity and opportunity to promote values and interests, and the ability to influence one's own and other's lives.

Each individual and each stakeholder group has unique VIPs. When VIPs are congruent in relationship to each other and congruent among groups, organizations have a greater chance of creating a positive environment that supports personal and collective well-being.

How does an addiction counseling professional decide when to work towards resilience and when to decide to leave for a different environment? This is not a reality for me, but I am just curious about the discussion.

A: If there is a continuing mismatch between the professional's mission, values, and sense of well-being and the current work culture and environment, the person has to decide if they have the energy and commitment to work it through and develop resilience and stay. It's possible that the mismatch is so wide a gap that the only healthy path for both the professional and the organization is to have an amicable divorce and leave. If the person decides to stay to gain from the "golden handcuffs" of retirement or health benefits, then it is their responsibility to own that decision and work with a positive attitude to make the best of the decision and still serve clients without resentment or personal distress.

I have 4 additions counselors that work for my agency; anything I can do as a director to promote self-care?

A:

Lead by serving as an example, setting policies that hard-wire self-care into how the agency runs, and introduce practices that make self-care the norm. Remember to harness at least four of six sources of influence (see handout):

1. Personal motivation: Want to do it
2. Personal ability: Able to do it
3. Social motivation: Get friends to cheer
4. Social ability: Learn from others
5. Environmental motivation: Use modest incentives
6. Environmental ability: Make it easy to do

What were the myths that Deborah mentioned?

A:

One thing that contributes to burnout and keeps people stuck is the myths and misperceptions we have about change, including:

1. Relying on willpower for long-term change
2. Attempting big leaps instead of baby steps
3. Ignoring how environment shapes behaviors
4. Trying to stop old behaviors instead of creating new ones
5. Blaming failures on lack of motivation
6. Underestimating the power of triggers
7. Believing that information leads to action (We humans aren't so rational. We think we're rational, but we're rationalizing.)
8. Focusing on abstract goals more than concrete behaviors
9. Seeking to change a behavior forever, not initially just for a short time.
10. Assuming that behavior change is difficult

I am a new graduating student and starting my new career in AODA counseling, and thus far I am uber excited. How do I keep that feeling going?

A: Great, congratulations that you are so excited. Put yourself in a position to be the team member who is the Change Agent for any new innovations at work so you are growing and sharing your enthusiasm. Or start a journal club where interested staff meets an hour a month to share one new article or paper or book chapter they read. Remain curious about your successes and "failures" if clients do well or not. Look for what you could have done differently or what went well. Think of all data as good data because data provide you with the information you need to improve. Use all outcomes as a learning experience to identify what worked and what you should keep doing, and what didn't work that you can change next time.

What is a good resource for organizational action to improve morale?

A:

Start small and go tiny. Look for personal, social, and environmental factors that could help boost morale by connecting the work to people's values, helping people improve their skills, increasing team work and team learning, rewarding small wins, and making the job easier to do by managing the environment. Ask people themselves what would make a difference. Be an astute observer and notice what's happening when morale is better so that you can do more of it.

How do we convince administrators to respect reasonable limits on how many clinical hours can reasonably be maintained without burnout, in an environment of increasingly managed care?

A:

That's a great question that so many clinicians wonder about: How do they get administrators to realize the negative impact (i.e. burnout) it has on clinicians when the demand to see more clients keeps increasing?

Just as it can be hard to "convince" clients to change their behavior, it can be hard to "convince" administrators of something if it goes against what they think, believe, or must do based on their job responsibilities and assigned tasks.

How might taking a collaborative approach apply in this situation? What are the values and goals administrators share with clinicians? What might help administrators hear and see the situation from the clinicians' perspective? How would it benefit administrators to sit on the same side of the table with clinicians to examine the problem and explore new ways to look at the challenges and solutions?

How might you change the conversation from how to do more to a conversation about how to serve your client population more effectively?

It seems that I am hearing a lot about motivating others, i.e. clients. I evidently have missed something. I can only create an environment in which another will choose to self-motivate.

A:

Sometimes you can "motivate" others for a while, but for change to "stick," motivation must ultimately come from the person him/herself. Our perspective is that all lasting change is self-change, requiring self-motivation. At the same time, you can do a lot to help clients develop intrinsic motivation. Borrow insights from the *Six Sources of Influence* and the *Fogg Behavior Model* because both suggest ways to facilitate change without depending on the significant amount of motivation people usually think they need to move toward change.

I would make two points here:

1. Recognize how a little bit of motivation can go a long way if the behavior change is: a) easy enough to do; and b) triggered by a reliable, solid routine, signal, or other cue.
2. Look beyond just personal motivation to help clients move into change. Help them develop behavioral skills; harness social support and guidance; and manage the environment so that it supports the behaviors they want to develop, and rewards their micro-accomplishments.

Think about how any intensive program (drug program, weight-loss retreat, etc) achieves its results. These programs address many aspects of the personal, social, and environmental dimensions by providing skills training, social support and shared learning, offering rewards, and structuring the environment to promote the desired behavior and reduce temptations of undesirable behavior. It's a lot easier to change behavior within this setting. People often have trouble sustaining their gains once back at home because they lose the social and environmental supports, and are reduced to depending on just personal motivation. Help clients line up as many factors as possible to support them in change, and they'll go a lot farther.

The motivation for change is one of the hardest parts for me. I know I need to take better care of my physical health, but once I get home I've lost all motivation. Any suggestions?

A:

You are not alone: This is such a common challenge! The key is to start teeny tiny and specific. Turn desirable behaviors into good habits so taking better care of your physical health becomes automatic. When you make desirable behaviors tiny enough and trigger them with something you already do on a routine basis, you won't need nearly as much motivation because the behavior will be triggered without your even thinking about it. In keeping with BJ Fogg's "formula" for *Tiny Habits*, make sure to add a celebration (physical gesture, vocalization, or both) at the end.

To begin, think about routines you do every day and identify a behavior you can naturally link to the trigger.

Here are several examples of routines people have used to trigger physical exercise. These little behaviors have become the foundation for a lot more activity throughout their daily routines.

After...

Flushing the toilet...do 3 squats

Turning on the shower and waiting for it to heat up...jump up and down 5 times

Pouring the water into the coffee filter and waiting it to drip in the morning...do 2 pushups

Walking through the door or their home office...do 3 jumping jacks

Swinging their legs out of bed and putting their feet on the floor...do 3 pushups

Getting into their pajamas at night...do 3 leg lifts

Waiting in line at the store, at the bus stop...do 5 toe raises

Notice that triggers are very specific, and behaviors really tiny. With a strong trigger and behavior that is super easy to do, your new, desired behavior will become automatic. Once your *Tiny Habit* is solid, it's easy to add to it and eventually do many (or, much) more of the desired behavior than just the original *Tiny Habit*.

One last tip: Don't move the bar on your *Tiny Habit*. Keep it really tiny. Once you reach your *Tiny Habit* goal (ex, 2 pushups, 3 jumping jacks, etc), you can always do more, but consider anything beyond the original behavior a bonus or "extra credit." That way, on the days that you may not have what it takes to do all that you have built up to, you can still do your *Tiny Habit* and reward yourself!

Here's an example of the "magic" of *Tiny Habits*: One of my *Tiny Habits* is to do 3 pushups while my coffee brews. I have worked up to 15 push-ups, but I keep the 3 and consider the other 12 a bonus. On one particular day, I had gotten only a few hours of sleep and as I walked toward the kitchen, I said to myself very consciously, "No way am I going to do any exercise today! I am just too tired. I want to rest, so exercise is absolutely not going to happen!" I then entered the kitchen, got my decaf going in the espresso machine, and didn't become aware of what I was doing after that until I found myself in the middle of cranking out my sixth or seventh pushup! I confess that I was totally "mindless" and just fell into this automatic routine...but what a great thing be able to do for myself "on automatic!"