

6.1: Self Care in HCH

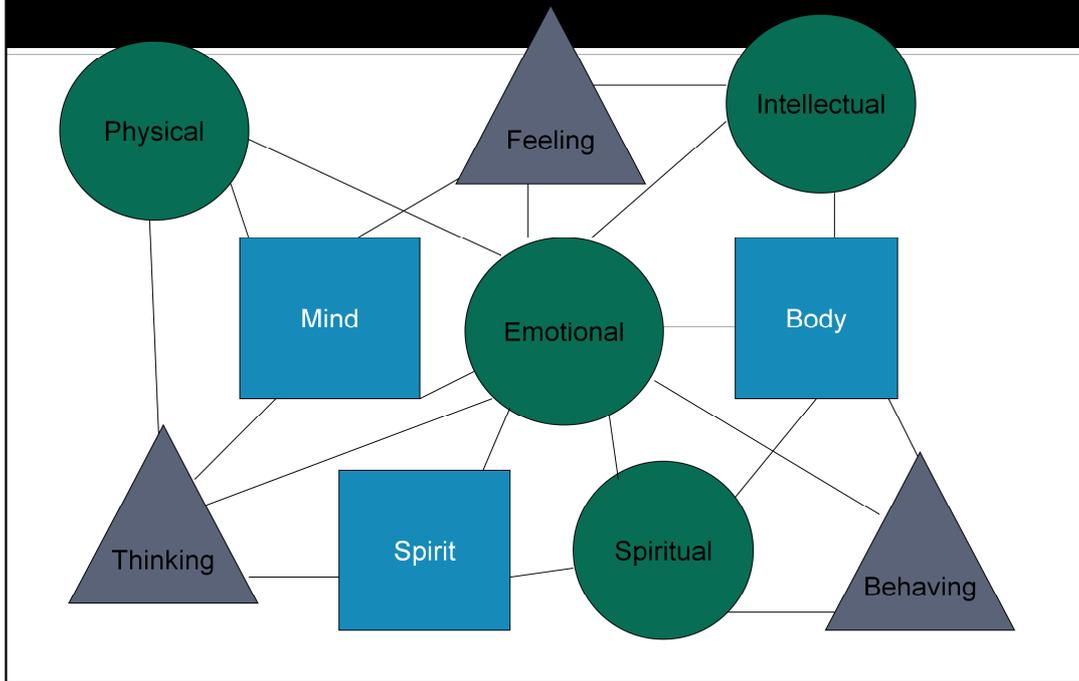
HCH workers know that service providers are often so focused on the trauma of the people they are serving that they do not recognize the impact of that trauma on themselves. In the first segment of this module, you will explore the importance of understanding self care, common causes of stress in HCH work, and the realities of secondary trauma.

How do we understand self care?

... maintaining our ability as human beings to function effectively in the world while meeting the multiple challenges of daily life with a sense of energy, vitality, and confidence.

In order to effectively serve others, it is important that we take care of ourselves. Self-care is about maintaining [scroll in?] our ability as human beings to function effectively in the world while meeting the multiple challenges of daily life with a sense of energy, vitality, and confidence.

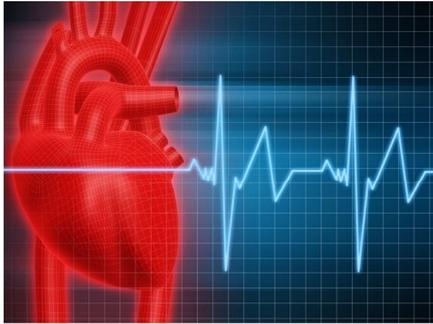
Dimensions of Self Care



The term “self-care” spans a full range of issues: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Some conceptualize this construct by considering the dimensions of mind, body, and spirit, or in terms of thinking, feeling, and behaving. No matter how one breaks down the dimensions of self-care, all of these different aspects are inter-connected. **Failure to take care of oneself in one realm can lead to consequences in the other.**

Identifying Personal & Professional Stress

- Divorce
- Death
- Parenting
- Catastrophes
- Caseload
- Clientele
- Systemic issues
- Job expectations
- Organizational issues



Self care also involves understanding that you can have two kinds of stress: personal stress and professional stress. While examples of personal distress include divorce, death of a loved one, parenting, and dealing with natural catastrophes, examples of professional stress experienced by HCH workers can revolve around heavy caseloads, difficulties presented by clients, dysfunctional systems of care, one's own expectations of the job, and organizational issues.

Counteracting Personal & Professional Stress

- Counseling
- Journaling
- Developing coping skills
- Developing healthy balance
- Taking time out
- Professional development & CE
- Clinical supervision & consultation
- Time management



When sources of stress are properly identified, individuals can then begin problem-solving and developing strategies to address them. Personal stresses can often be addressed through counseling, journaling, developing coping skills and healthy balance, and taking time out. Professional stresses can be addressed through professional development and continuing education, effective supervision and consultation, and time management, but stressors are a constant for HCH workers.

Common Stresses in Homeless Services

- Job function challenges
- Job security issues
- Relations with supervisors and co-workers
- Expectations of how things “should” be
- The risk of caring



The reading assignment for this first segment of this module is called “Common Causes of Stress in Homeless Services.” This handout documents what many HCH providers identified as universal stressors in providing HCH services, including job function challenges, job security issues, relations with supervisors and co-workers, expectations of how things ‘should’ be, and the risk of caring. Many of these potential job stressors can be experienced in any professional setting. By becoming aware of these potential stressors, you can prepare yourself to identify and address potentially stressful experiences you may have in your work.

Secondary Traumatic Stress



- Signs include:
 - Social withdrawal
 - Feelings of despair
 - Decreased interest in self-care

HCH workers also need to be aware of the reality of secondary traumatic stress. Secondary traumatic stress is different from burnout, and like all stress, can appear in the emotional, spiritual, interpersonal, and physical areas of one's life. As you provide trauma-informed care to others, be sure to be aware of signs of secondary trauma in yourself and your co-workers. A handout listing these signs, including social withdrawal, feelings of despair, and even a decreased interest in "self-care," is also included as part of this module.

In the video for this segment, you will hear more about identifying and responding effectively to secondary trauma in HCH care.