Caring for Yourself to Care for Others: Approaches to Workplace Wellness

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Work Stress and Burnout
- Work Stress= Subjective experience of high physical, psychological, or time-related work demands
- Burnout= Chronic state of stress that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism and detachment, and/or feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment
  - For Americans: 1, 3, 4
    - 44% report their stress has increased in the last 5 years
    - 79% feel stress sometimes or frequently during their day
    - 30-40% experience high levels of stress and/or exhaustion related to work
- Work stress and burnout leads to: 1, 5, 6
  - Increases in absenteeism
  - Long term consequences including mental health, cognitive impairments, and chronic condition
  - Declines in productivity, work satisfaction, and attrition

Stress and Performance- Yerkes-Dodson Model

Stress Signals
- Stress signals can help us recognize when we are experiencing stress, and include:
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings
  - Behaviors
  - Physiological Reactions
- See handout for specific examples

Creating a Plan to Cope

Prevention
- Exercise
- Healthy Eating
- Sleep
- Meaningful Leisure
- Healthy Relationships
- Meditation
- Time Management

In the Moment
- Imagery and Visualization
- Deep Breathing
- Self-Talk
- Mindfulness
- Apps

Afterward
- Sunshine and Vitamin D
- Do not Overcommit
- Show Gratitude
- Creative Pursuits

Applications in the Workplace
- At USC’s Disability Services and Programs, a “wellness committee” was implemented to plan monthly events.
  Examples include:
  - “Doodle and De-stress”
  - Walking Buddy Program
  - Guided Meditation
  - Office Yoga
- Some ways to incorporate wellness into your workday:
  - Walk to a colleague’s office to ask a question instead of instant messaging them
  - Just say “maybe,” rather than overcommitting yourself
  - Plan a day to eat lunch with your colleagues– bring your lunch from home and don’t talk about work!

Discussion Questions
- How do you know when you’re experiencing stress?
- What are common sources of stress for you at work?
- How could you better care for yourself during your workday?

References