

Psychotherapy Guidebook

BURN-OUT PREVENTION

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Burn-Out Prevention

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DEFINITION

Burn-Out Prevention addresses a major problem among staff members of psychiatric clinics, drug abuse clinics, and crisis intervention centers: “burn-out.” Burn-out is a chronic low-level fatigue that is the result of Constant encounters with difficult clients. Burn-out causes therapists to protect themselves by contacting their patients less fully or by treating their patients automatically and impersonally. It is not uncommon for those affected by burn-out to choose to leave their profession entirely.

Burn-out can be prevented. Through techniques that raise the counselor’s energy level and improve clinical work, the Burn-Out Prevention workshop offers a viable alternative to a problem faced by ali those in parallel professions.

HISTORY

Burn-Out Prevention was developed in 1976 by the authors. Since then, the Burn-Out Prevention workshop has been given at six regional conferences

of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, at the AHP Eastern Education Conference, and at the AHP National Conference. This workshop has been taught throughout the country as part of in-staff training at counseling centers, hospitals, mental health, and alcohol clinics, and as an accredited course at graduate schools.

APPLICATIONS

This kind of therapy can be applied in any psychiatric setting, though it of course requires well-trained therapists or at least experienced supervision. It has been applied in the psychiatric departments of general hospitals (including in-patient departments), in psychiatric emergency services, student health services, psychb-therapeutic clinics. and private practice. It depends on the care fui selection of suitable patients, but when correctly used it results in a marked increase of efficien-cy. Straker has described the beneficiai impact of Brief Psychotherapy on a psychi-atric department burdened with long waiting lists and poor staff morale. The methods are particularly important at the present time in the United States, in view of schemes for financing a limited number of psychotherapeutic sessions through health insurance.

TECHNIQUE

The Burn-Out Prevention workshop applies the ancient teachings of Kindalini Yoga to the specialized needs of the therapist. In each of the following areas, yogic and meditative techniques are used to build the therapist's resilience and to increase his effectiveness.

1. The human aura. It is currently becoming recognized and accepted that human beings have around them an electromagnetic field, the visual manifestation of which is called the aura. Kirlian Photography, a photographic process that produces an auralike image on film, demonstrates that happiness can increase the radiance of an aura while depression, even the mere presence of a depressed person, can reduce the aura's radiance. Participants in the Burn-Out Prevention workshop learn to experience their own magnetic field and that of others, to change the quality and quantity of their aura, and to ensure that contacts with their patients are positive and nurturant.

2. Intuition and creative therapy. Often the therapist will contact a client through empathetic techniques that reduce his own equanimity, consequently reducing his effectiveness. The Burn-Out Prevention workshop teaches yoga and meditation techniques that open the therapist to working within an intuitive mode. At such a time the therapist's reactions and interventions are perfectly tuned to the patient's needs, and the truly creative breakthroughs occur. This is not an accident. The Burn-Out Prevention workshop teaches the therapist to increase the frequency and effectiveness of the intuitive mode.

- 3. Defense mechanism relaxation and healing.** When a therapist has identified a client's problem and has created a nurturant environment, he is then ready to effect a positive change in the client. This involves relaxing defense mechanisms and preparing the client to receive the therapist's healing energy. The Burn-Out Prevention workshop teaches the art and science of using the power of the voice to work through defense mechanisms and contact clients. Relaxation techniques, special meditations, yoga therapy, and massage are used in various combinations to help a client develop his own healing inner rhythm.
- 4. Becoming more effective.** The difference between an average therapist and a truly effective therapist can lie as much in their own personal lives as in their behavior in their clinical work. Participants are shown techniques to make their own lives more consistently free of depression and anxiety, thereby making them stronger and more effective in their personal relationships, as well as their relationships with clients and colleagues.

APPLICATIONS

Originally designed for psychotherapists and drug rehabilitators, Burn-Out Prevention has been found to be effective for psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, "hot-line" counselors, nurses, educators, the clergy, and all those who work in professions of close human contact.