PRACTITIONERS – DO WE PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH?

Dana Horne, Lyn Tracey, Paige Wyatt
INTRODUCTIONS

Dana Horne
Asst. Dean for Student & Academic Affairs
University at Buffalo
School of Social Work
Buffalo, NY

Lyn Tracey
Student Learning Advisor
Griffith College
Queensland, Australia

Paige Wyatt
Pre-Med Intake Advisor/Academic Advisor
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT
UB SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

- Graduate Student Population (487)
  - PhD Social Welfare
  - Doctorate of Social Work (DSW)* (starting Fall 2019)
  - Master of Social Work (MSW) Online & Seated Programs
  - Dual Degrees (JD/MSW, MBA/MSW, MPH, MSW)
- Predominantly female
- 60% Full-Time, 40% Part-Time
- Traditional college-aged students → second career individuals
- Trauma informed & human rights perspective infused curriculum
- Faculty Advising Model with Student Services Unit providing administrative support
GRiffith college

- Pathway to Griffith University
- Part of Navitas group
- Brisbane & Gold Coast campuses
- Predominantly 1st year students (Diploma > Bachelor)
- Total student population ~2,200
- Lower entry requirements
  - academic (local)
  - language (international)
- ~ 56% international students
- 12 week trimesters
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

- University Studies serves undecided and exploring students
  - ~1200 US students + PMI ~250 students per AY
- Advising model varies by College: Faculty & Professional Advisors
  - Developmental / Holistic Advising in University Studies
- 16,703 students ~ 15,000 undergraduate (Fall 2017)
  - 47% female
  - 53% Montana residents: Rural students, Native students
  - Primarily first & second year students in University Studies
BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

What are your best hopes for today’s presentation?
TODAY’S OBJECTIVES

- Open dialogue about what we preach versus what we practice
- Identify causes & effects of advisor stress
- Identify advising challenges which prohibit advisor wellness
- Identify self-care mechanisms & strategies to enhance advisor wellness
- Learn from one another through shared anecdotes and examples
WHAT WE PREACH...

We typically advise students to do the following to be successful in college and maintain balance:

▪ Engage with faculty to ask questions/get assistance
▪ Get involved on campus
▪ Use good time management strategies
▪ Prioritize assignments/readings
▪ Get adequate sleep
▪ Balance between social and academic time
▪ Learn to set boundaries (Say ‘No’) to not take on too much
▪ Reach out/Ask for help
▪ Advocate for themselves
DO WE PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH?

It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself. - Eleanor Roosevelt

walk the talk.

why do you not practice what you preach
CONTRIBUTING BARRIERS

- Competing demands of time (both at-work and in-life)
- Depth of professional responsibilities too broad
- Advising load too large
- Limited resources
- Lack of support/adequate supervision
- Lack of professional development/training
- Advising “issues” become more and more complex (external/non-advising related creep)

Result of Barriers = Increased Advising Stress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVISING STRESS - CAUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working with a wide range of student issues:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sexual identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mental illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meeting parents’ expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meeting institutional expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationship issues (i.e. roommates, partners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- College adjustment/ transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students with complex issues/histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other vocational challenges:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vicarious exposure to secondary trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocating for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leading change, especially related to social justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work/caseload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unsupportive colleagues/supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Resources not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IMPACT ON ADVISORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Traumatic Stress</th>
<th>Compassion Fatigue</th>
<th>Vicarious Trauma</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Immediate (but can be cumulative)</td>
<td>● Often interchanged with Secondary Traumatic Stress</td>
<td>● Chronic</td>
<td>● Chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Single Instance</td>
<td>● Secondary Traumatic Stress + Burnout</td>
<td>● Traumatic experience</td>
<td>● Universal (can happen to anyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Stress from helping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Cumulative persistent stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTING IMPACT OF ADVISOR STRESS

Burnout
3 dimensions of burnout: (Maslach, 1982)
1) Emotional exhaustion
2) Depersonalization
3) Reduced personal accomplishment

Impact of burnout in work environment:
- Cynicism
- Inflexibility with self and others
- Distancing from students
- Higher rates of absenteeism
- Reduced productivity
- Leave the profession
RESULTING IMPACT OF ADVISOR STRESS (continued)

Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Excessive worry
- Physical symptoms like racing heart
- Heightened startle response - “jumpy” or “on guard”

Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout with symptoms that can include:
  - Feeling like a failure
  - Feeling disconnected from others

Other resulting health disparities
- Exhaustion (physical & psychological)
- Depression
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Negative attitude/disillusionment
ADVISING CHALLENGES

UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO
- Nature of curriculum in social work may elicit triggers of unresolved personal challenges
- Higher prevalence of students with trauma, addiction, and/or mental health histories
- Demanding academic schedule with competing priorities

GRIFFITH COLLEGE
- Student diversity: high proportion of international students
- Increase in mental health issues
- Limited training or professional development
- Heavy workload

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
- Land-grant institution: open enrollment
- Prevalence and severity of mental health issues in student population
- Advisor to advisee ratio
- Educational background of advisor: M.Ed vs. MSW
- Limited incentive-based “wellness” program for enrolled employees
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO</th>
<th>GRIFFITH COLLEGE</th>
<th>MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Hot Potato” from faculty to student services</td>
<td>Student Counsellor burnout</td>
<td>Navigation of institution from student perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blurred lines between being educators vs. being social workers</td>
<td>Student with multiple mental health issues</td>
<td>Student with severe social anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased student body with past trauma histories</td>
<td>Suicidal student</td>
<td>Student with past trauma history: Managing her experience on campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRESS + CHALLENGES = ?

Importance of Adequate Supervision:
- Effective supervision can help mediate stress and burnout among employees
- Encourage development of career sustaining behaviors
  - Allow/budget for professional development opportunities that focus on professional well-being
- Support and encourage a work environment that values self-care and promotes work-life balance

Career Sustaining Behaviors:
- Set work/life boundaries
- Acknowledge the stress of the job but remember the positive aspects of job
- Seek out lifelong learning opportunities for personal and professional growth
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Incorporate self-care into your daily practice
ADVISOR SELF-CARE

“Intentional self-care allows advisers to maximize:
▪ effective critical self-reflection
▪ their work with students and staff
▪ their efforts to foster an inclusive campus culture
▪ their ability to influence personal, departmental, structural, and systemic changes for social justice
▪ their ability to develop their skills as agents for social change”
(Towle, 2016)

“Self-care is a spontaneous, goal-oriented activity used to enhance and maintain health ...characterised by the integration of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being”
(Orem; Faunce as cited in Lin, 2012)
STRATEGIES

- Build strong professional mentorship connections
- Establish/manage boundaries (avoid overinvolvement)
- Strive for work/life balance
- Mindfulness/meditation
- Connect with nature
- Professional development
STRATEGIES (continued)

- Make a self-care plan that rewards you
- Journalling
- Seek external support:
  - Supervision: peer & professional
  - Outsourced consultants
Developing a self-care plan for the workplace:

1. How do you currently cope with workplace stress? *(Handout #1: Lifestyle Behaviors)*

1. What do you currently do for self-care in the workplace? *(Handout #2: Self-Care Assessment)*

1. What activities enhance your well-being in the workplace? *(Handout #3: Maintenance Self-Care Worksheet)*
TAKEAWAYS

When you return to your respective campuses, what one thing might you attempt to incorporate into your daily practice?

What conversations might you start with your colleagues/supervisor?

How might you advocate for yourself for a better work/life balance?
QUESTIONS
REFERENCES

CONTACT US

Dana Horne
Asst. Dean for Student & Academic Affairs
University at Buffalo
School of Social Work
Buffalo, NY
dhorne@buffalo.edu
1(716) 645-1229

Lyn Tracey
Student Learning Advisor
Griffith College
Queensland, Australia
Lyn.Tracey@griffithcollege.edu.au
+61 7 3735 5813

Paige Wyatt
Pre-Med Intake Advisor/Academic Advisor
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT
Paige.Wyatt@montana.edu
1(406) 994-3532