

Paramedic Community of Practice – Series 2

Self-Care



Presenters:

Lisa Weatherbee BN RN

Kristina Anton, Paramedic

Date: November 14th, 2023

Territorial Honouring



The Palliative Care ECHO Project

The Palliative Care ECHO Project is a 5-year national initiative to cultivate communities of practice and establish continuous professional development among health care providers across Canada who care for patients with life-limiting illness.

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Introductions

Presenters:

Lisa Weatherbee

BN RN CHPCN©

Provincial Palliative Care Practice Leader, NS
Pallium Master Facilitator/Coach

Kristina Anton, ACP

Paramedic Specialist, BC Emergency Health Services

Panelists:

Karen O'Brien

Frontline Paramedic since 1999, with a side of community paramedicine.

SWORBHP Associate Instructor

Pallium Facilitator

Dr. Jitin Sondhi, MD, CCFP (PC), FCFP

Regional Clinical Co-Lead, Palliative Care, OH West
Adult and Pediatric Palliative Care

Stuart Woolley

Paramedic since 2003 in UK & Canada, current
Paramedic Practice Leader in BCEHS leading Palliative
Care, Low Acuity Patient management & Paramedic
Specialist support.

Welcome and Reminders

- Please introduce yourself in the chat!
- Your microphones are muted. There will be time during this session when you can unmute yourself for questions and discussion.
- You are welcome to use the chat function at any time to ask questions and add comments.
- Remember not to disclose any Personal Health Information (PHI) during the session.
- This session is being recorded and will be emailed to registrants within the next week.

Overview of Topics

Session #	Session title	Date/ Time
Session 1	Self-Care	November 14, 2023 from 12–1:00 p.m. ET
Session 2	Serious illness conversations	January 16, 2024 from 12–1:00 p.m. ET
Session 3	Alternate destination in paramedicine; redirection to institutions other than a hospital	March 12, 2024 from 12–1:00 p.m. ET
Session 4	Addressing management of neurodiverse populations receiving a palliative approach to care	May 14, 2024 from 12–1:00 p.m. ET
Session 5	Pain and Symptom Management	July 22, 2024 from 12–1 p.m. ET

Session Learning Objectives

- To develop an enhanced understanding of the importance of self care
- To become familiar with and consider what strategies would support your self care
- To recognize the connection between self care and a sustainable career in paramedicine



What is self care?

- Self care is a proactive and holistic approach to promoting personal health and wellbeing to support professional care of others
- Self care is the balance of care for others with care for self
- Self care can be broadly described as a clinician's own maintenance of good wholistic health and wellbeing
- Self-care refers to activities and practices that we can engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and maintain and enhance our short- and longer-term health and well-being.



(Gravier et al., 2019)

(Mills et al., 2018)

Why is self care essential when providing palliative care?



Why is self care essential when providing palliative care?

- Palliative care can be an emotionally demanding setting of care
- Paramedics must take care of their own health and wellbeing so that they can effectively and competently care for patients
- Regular exposure to death and suffering is inevitable and losses can be cumulative
- Healthcare providers who care for seriously ill patients face a high risk of diminished person wellbeing including burnout, moral distress, and compassion fatigue

(Buonaccorso et al. 2022)

(Stilos et al. 2021)

Why is self care essential when providing palliative care?

- Sleep disturbances
- Poor nutrition
- Limited physical activity
- High rates of musculoskeletal injury



What happens if self care is neglected?

- A decline in performance level
- Problem solving capacity decreases
- Quality of life can deteriorate
- Number of mistakes increases
- Physical health declines
- Burnout/compassion fatigue
- PTSD



Barriers to Self Care

- Workload - Inability to take time for self care due to call volume
- Workplace culture - In some workplaces there is stigma associated with self care which can lead to fear of being labelled as selfish
- Low self worth - When self criticism and low self worth undermines self care as a priority
- Lack of planning - Not building a routine that prioritizes self care can lead to it being forgotten or missed



(Mills et al., 2018)

What are the benefits of self care?

Investing in self care is associated with many positive outcomes including:

- Minimizing burnout
- Decrease in compassion fatigue
- Reduction in moral distress

When health care providers tend to their personal well-being there is :

- increased potential for job engagement
- compassion satisfaction
- resilience



(Stilos et al., 2021)

Self-care is not simply about limiting or addressing professional stressors. It is also about **enhancing your overall well-being**. There are common aims to almost all self-care efforts:

- Taking care of physical and psychological health
- Managing and reducing stress
- Honoring emotional and spiritual needs
- Fostering and sustaining relationships
- Achieving an equilibrium across one's personal and professional life



Three Key Elements of Self-care

Awareness

“The first step in enacting self-care is recognition not just of its value but its essential nature to support a long, happy and successful career as an out-of-hospital clinician.”



(Gravier et al. 2019)

Expression

“These are all based on the concept of the clinician expressing their thoughts and feelings to become aware of and resolve them. Aspects of a clinician’s life which might benefit from expression can be variously divided into a range of dimensions including physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, professional and social.”



Planning

“Care planning is an individual activity and as with patients, no two clinician self-care plans will be identical.”



What could a self-care plan look like?

- Ensure you attend all briefings or trainings at your workplace
- Assess where you are physically and emotionally
- Set boundaries
- Limit your exposure to media
- Adequate nutrition
- Watch your emotional responses and do a self check-in
- Healthy methods to release emotion
- Avoid drugs and alcohol
- Regularly contact friends and chosen family
- Consider a buddy system



Self-Care Plan

Example of negative self-talk

- "I got a CHANG
- "I do n studer
- group
- "I can' develo
- studer
- help m

You get it. Try to think abo yourself.

4. **Next, make a list of w**

Example of people to s

- My bo him. S
- I didn' call my late. H
- I am d tell me

You get this too. Not e who can be supportive

Examples of things to s

- I s
- I s
- I s
- I s
- I s
- Ot

Again, you get it.

5. **Write this plan on a 3x5 card. Look at it often. Add a**

(Prepared by Elaine S. Rinfrette)

Emergency Self-Care Worksheet

Why do I need to do this? It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when things get tough. It is best to **have a plan ready** for when you need it.

What should be in it? You need to consider 3 general areas: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

- 1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset that will be good for you.**
 - What will help me relax?

For example,

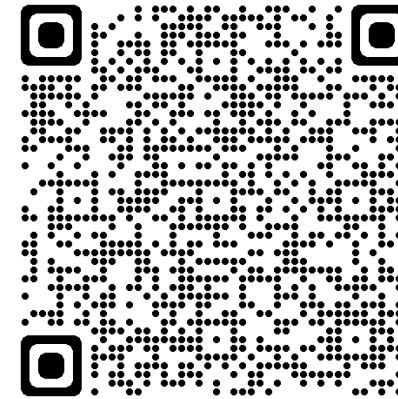
 - Breathing, Muscle relaxation, Music
 - Reading for fun, watching a movie
 - Exercising, Taking a walk
 - What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood? _____
 - List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.
 - What can I do that will help me throughout the day? _____

For example,

 - Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
 - Remember to breathe
 - Watch my thoughts
 - Stay in the moment
 - Other: What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU? _____
- 2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.**

For example, your best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.

 - Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:
 - Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious?
 - Who can I call if I am lonely?
 - Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
 - Who will listen?
 - Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
 - Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
 - Other: _____
- 3. Next, make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.**



Where do you start?



Self-Care

- Identify your support system early
- Regular exercise/ physical activity
- Resilience Training (R2MR)
- Yoga/mindfulness/meditation/spirituality
- Formal and informal debriefing



Mental Health Continuum Model



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal mood fluctuations • Calm & takes things in stride • Good sense of humour • Performing well • In control mentally • Normal sleep patterns • Few sleep difficulties • Physically well • Good energy level • Physically and socially active • No or limited alcohol use/ gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable / impatient • Nervous • Sadness / overwhelmed • Displaced sarcasm • Procrastination • Forgetfulness • Trouble sleeping • Intrusive thoughts • Nightmares • Muscle tension / headaches • Low energy • Decreased activity/socializing • Regular but controlled alcohol use / gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Anxiety • Pervasively sad / hopeless • Negative attitude • Poor performance / workaholic • Poor concentration / decisions • Restless disturbed sleep • Recurrent images / nightmares • Increased aches and pains • Increased fatigue • Avoidance • Withdrawal • Increased alcohol use / gambling is hard to control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry outbursts / aggression • Excessive anxiety / panic attacks • Depressed / suicidal thoughts • Over insubordination • Can't perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate • Can't fall asleep or stay asleep • Sleeping too much or too little • Physical illnesses • Constant fatigue • Not going out or answering phone • Alcohol or gambling addiction • Other addictions
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Self-Care Continued

- Practice work life balance
- Regular check ins with your primary care provider
- Maintain interests and relationships outside work
- Be self aware and make self-care a priority



Self-care Enablers

- Acknowledging the importance of self care
- Prioritizing self-care into life and schedule and taking a preventative approach
- Positive workplace cultures that are supportive of self-care
- Self advocacy and self-acceptance - includes being realistic about limitations



Mills, et al. (2018)

Self Compassion

“Self-care is built on self-compassion. If your compassion does not include yourself, it is not complete; it extends to yourself and your clients equally.”

How could our workplaces support self care and wellness?

- Building a culture of wellness and resilience
- Offer opportunities for connection among employees
- Positivity and optimism has been connected to increased resilience
- Help employees adapt to change
- Empower employees to identify solutions



Case Based Discussion



Case

Jack has just graduated and started a full time position on your platoon
He says he is worried about finding a balance between work and home
Expresses he is worried about meals, sleep, and finding time to be active
He asks you what he can do to look after his self-care?



What would you say?

What are the challenges you currently face?

What can we strive to do differently?

Does your workplace support your self-care/wellness?

What strategies do you recommend for self care?

Considerations

- Do you practice self care?
- What do you think works well?
- Do you have any suggestions we have not talked about?
- Can you name one thing you could commit to doing for your own self care?



Resources

Bilsker, D., and Gilbert, M. Improving Resilient Coping in Paramedic Services (2020)
[5RFWorkbook2020_v10_DIGITAL.pdf \(apbc.ca\)](#)

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<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-018-0318-0>.

Resources

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[Self-Care for Healthcare workers referenced.pdf \(paramedics.org\)](#) Secretariat, T. B. of C. (2011, September 21). *Government of Canada*. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/fundamentals-employers-responsibilities.html>

Stilos, K., and Wynnychuk, L. (2021). Reflection on practice. Self-care is a MUST for health care providers caring for the dying. *Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal*, 31 (2). 239-241.

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Session Wrap-Up

- Please fill out our feedback survey! A link has been added to the chat.
- Help us spread the word! A copy of our flyer for this COP has also been added to the chat.
- Join us for our next session about **Serious Illness Conversations** on **January 16th 2024** from **12-1pm ET**.



Thank You



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