

# Emotional and Organization Support

## Week 5 - The Ongoing Journey of Posttraumatic Growth

**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network**



# Objectives for this Session:

- Discuss one definition of posttraumatic growth.
- Demonstrate two strategies to help support individual growth.
- Explain the difference between appreciation and recognition and illustrate two techniques to recognize staff.
- See examples of how to bring about posttraumatic growth through conversations and direct observation.
- Learn from staff what goes well and could be improved, and how to assemble a test of change.

# Emotional and Organization Support Module

## 5 Critical Change Opportunities

- Introduce participants to two of the principles of trauma informed care, safety and trust.
- Expand emotional intelligence by recognizing one's stress response.
- Train staff in strategies to respond to stress by identifying feelings and needs with the language of nonviolent communication.
- Integrate a mourning practice into facility culture via team-based processes, such as rounds and debriefs.
- Support posttraumatic growth by building attuned active listening, debriefs, and learning into daily activities.

# New Questions?

- What is top of mind for you?
- Do you have any questions that we should be sure to cover this week?
- Has anything been particularly challenging or frustrating that you would like help advancing?

## *Chat Waterfall:*

**How do you describe or define posttraumatic growth?**



# What is posttraumatic growth?

- A “positive psychological change experienced as a result of a struggle with highly challenging life circumstances” and through establishing perspectives for a “new normal” when the old normal is no longer an option.”
- Qualities include:
  - Deliberate reflection – how have we been impacted?
  - Learning – what have we learned?
  - Growth – reimagining a new normal, a different status quo
- Emphasis on restoring function but more importantly achieving a higher level of functioning

Olsen et al. (2020). Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals. JAMA 324(18).

“Posttraumatic growth does not minimize the seriousness and severity of what has happened but can emerge from adversity through active management following the important process of grieving.”

Olsen et al. (2020). Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals. *JAMA* 324(18).



# Two strategies to support *individual* growth

1. Calm, safe place resource
2. Personal safety plan



# Calm, safe place

- A resource to help ground (balance, calm) an individual when feeling anxious, stressed, angry, fearful, etc.
- Identify a calm, safe place:
  - Where do you have fun?
  - Where do you go to relax?
- When you think of this place, what comes to mind?
  - What is your strongest memory of it?
  - What images, sounds, emotions, and smells accompany it?
  - Where do you notice these sensations in your body?

Michael Keller, LCSW  
Center for Psychological Trauma, LLC

Close your eyes and feel those positive feelings,  
and let a *simple word* come to your mind that can  
help remind you of this place.

We do not need to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

# Personal safety plan

- The personal safety plan is a strategy to manage stress/distress in the moment.
- When *beginning* to feel overwhelmed (“catching” the stress response), intentionally engage your safety plan to feel more charge of yourself and how you want to react in the situation
  - **We have choice!**
- What are three things that you can do to help you self-regulate, to regain balance, and to increase a sense of calm and agency?

Grounding is a key principle of  
trauma-informed care.

Grounding is a coping strategy to connect us  
with the present moment.

# Grounding ideas to include on your safety plan

- Rapid bursts of movement like jumping jacks or running stairs to discharge stress and quieten the body/mind
- Gentle movement like wiggling in your chair and tapping your feet on the floor to reconnect with the present moment
- Hold an ice cube in your hand and watch it melt
- Breath work (box breathing, 4-7-8 technique, etc.), elicit a yawn!
- Laughter, jokes, silliness, fun!
- Music (releases flushes of dopamine, a happiness-inducing chemical)
- Mantras like “A hard moment does not mean a hard rest of the day”
- Compassionate self-talk

# Personal safety plan

- The plan is different for each person. May have a work plan and a home plan.
  - What do you enjoy doing to relax and recenter?
  - *Ideas to come...*
- Share the safety plans at work (with team members), help support each other.
  - *Normalize* using strategies that support wellbeing
  - Some staff may not feel comfortable sharing
- Make the plans visible and accessible
  - Laminate cards, attach to back of ID badge, paste on clipboard, attach to car dashboard



## My Personal Safety Plan

If I am feeling overwhelmed,  
I will:

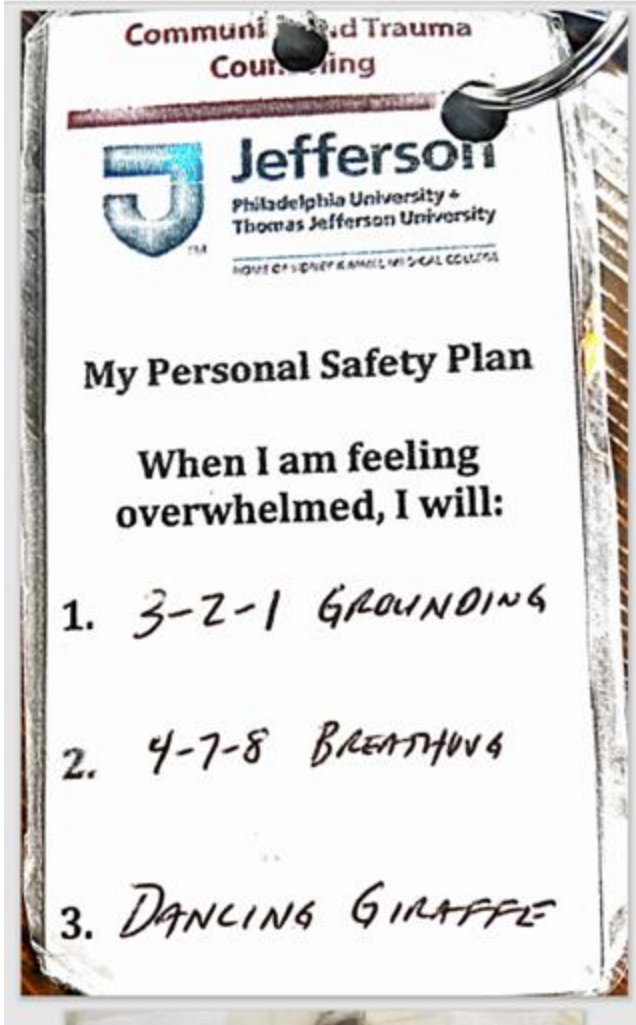
1. Exhale deeply and inhale, elicit a yawn
2. Soften the muscle in my face and belly
3. Get up and move around, go outside if possible
4. Hold my dog

**My Mantra:** May there be joy in this moment!

Sanctuary Model

# Sample ID Badge with Safety Plan

Front



Back





# Supporting Staff Wellbeing Gratitude and Recognition

# Gratitude practices, two ideas

1. Send a letter to staff member's family thanking them for sharing their special person at work. If possible, enclose a gift card for something that the family can do together.
2. Create an "Employee Care Plan" and identify the person's strengths, what gets them excited about work, routines that are important to them, how they prefer to be recognized, and fun things like their favorite soda and candy.

Ideas courtesy of Jeff Barrett, RN, MHA, NHA

# Is there a difference between recognition and appreciation?

- *Appreciation* is a pizza party.
  - Everyone is included.
  - Pizza parties are good! Yummy, too.
- *Recognition* is identifying specific actions of one person or a group of people.
  - Individualized to the situation

# Saying “thank you” in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Language

- NVC distinguishes three components in the expression of appreciation:
  1. The actions that have contributed to our well-being
  2. The particular needs of ours that have been fulfilled
  3. The pleasurable feelings engendered by the fulfillment of those needs

This is what you did; this is what I feel; this is the need of mine that was met.

Rosenberg M. Nonviolent Communication. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press; 2015.

Abu



Melissa



# Recognition Stories

- A well-written recognition story connects employees to the business with three components.
  1. Action – describe what they did
  1. Focus – relate this event to a company value
  1. Impact – describe the result, potential savings or other impact

“Increasing Employee Engagement Through Strategic Recognition” by Josh Bersin

Abu



Melissa



What recognition might someone give you that would have you jumping for joy?!



# Thank you!

**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network**



# Building a Culture of Emotional Safety and Trust to Support Staff Wellbeing

## Session 5 – How Active (Attuned) Listening and Learning Support Growth and Wellbeing

# What is Posttraumatic Growth?

- A “positive psychological change experienced as a result of a struggle with highly challenging life circumstances” and through establishing perspectives for a “new normal” when the old normal is no longer an option.”
- Qualities include:
  - **Deliberate reflection** – how have we been impacted?
  - **Learning** – what have we learned?
  - **Growth** – reimagining a new normal, a different status quo
- **Emphasis on restoring function but more importantly achieving a higher level of functioning**



Olsen et al. (2020). Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals. JAMA 324(18).

# Foster a Culture of Attuned Listening and Learning to Build Trust

- What are processes for staff to **share feelings** and **build trust**?
  - Employee Rounds
  - Employee Huddles
  - Debriefs
  - Pulse Surveys
  - Town Halls



**ASK** “What Matters...Now?”



**LISTEN** to “What Matters...Now.”



**DO** “What Matters...Now.”

# Questions to Ask to Support Post Traumatic Growth

eTable. Questions to Explore Domains of Posttraumatic Growth at the Individual and Organizational Levels

|              | Domains of posttraumatic growth  |   |   |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|---|--|---|
|              | Development of deeper relationships  | Openness to new possibilities   | Greater sense of strength   | Stronger sense of spirituality   | Greater appreciation  |
| Individual   | Who has experience surviving such a trauma?<br>Are there people whom I trust to share this experience and gain perspective in reframing the experience?  | While I cannot change what has happened, what can I learn from this experience?<br>How can this experience better prepare me for future stress and trauma?<br>How can I transform tragedy into triumph? | Because I survived this experience, am I stronger than I thought?<br>Are there role models who have grown stronger under conditions of extreme adversity and suffering? | Is this experience bigger than myself?<br>What brings meaning to my life? What are my true values?<br>Are my choices aligned with my values? | Will this be a wake-up call for me and push me to reorder priorities in my life?                |
| Organization | What can we learn from other organizations that have survived similar traumas?<br>Does our community feel they can trust and rely on us during crisis? Do we engage our community in open, honest 2-way communication? | Where have inertia and tradition prevented us from considering new ways of delivering care to better serve our patients?<br>Can this disruption propel our innovation and improvement?                  | What strength did our organization display in surviving this trauma?<br>How can we leverage this quality to bring about necessary change in other areas?                | What are our true mission, vision, and values?<br>Are we authentically serving our community and patients?                                   | Are we taking care of the well-being of the people of our organization to the extent we should? |



ASK “What Matters...Now?”

Olsen et al. (2020). Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals. JAMA 324(18).

# Questions for Leaders to Support Post Traumatic Growth



ASK “What Matters...Now?”

- **Development of deeper relationships**

- What can we learn from other organizations that have survived similar traumas? Does our community feel they can trust and rely on us during crisis? Do we engage our community in open, **honest 2-way communication**?

Hear Me

Prepare Me

- **Openness to new possibilities**

- Where have inertia and tradition prevented us from considering new ways of delivering care to better serve our patients? **Can this disruption propel our innovation and improvement?**

Hear Me

- **Greater sense of strength**

- What strength did our organization display in surviving this trauma? How can we leverage this quality to bring about necessary change in other areas?

Support me

- **Stronger sense of spirituality**

- What are our true mission, vision, and values? Are we authentically serving our community and patients?

Protect Me

- **Greater appreciation**

- Are we taking care of the well-being of the people of our organization to the extent we should?

Care for Me

Olsen et al. (2020). Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals. JAMA 324(18).

# How do we Recover and Grow...Together

- Focus on **personal stories** from residents/families and point of care and operational staff that reinforce **shared** purpose
- Create a **learning culture: Ask. Listen. Do** in every day activities. Incorporate learning and do what staff, residents, and families say matters most
  - Culture change and behavior change takes time!
- Support a **culture of staff growth**, wellbeing, and development of point of care “champions”
  - How might you use buddy systems in processes?
- Tap into **creativity of staff** and enhance teamwork/communication through incorporating improvement activities, tools, and training into everyday processes
- Promote **joy and celebration at work** and healthy relationships between staff and residents/families through direct observation, building empathy, and re-imagining the “new normal” together

# Types of Questions to Bring About Conversation:



- Q: What is meaningful in your daily work?
  - Goal: Reinforce shared purpose
- Q: What are the pebbles in your shoes? (What could be improved?)
  - Follow up Question: How would you improve it/them?
  - Goal: Acknowledge human fallibility, ideas for improvement, how to bring about change
    - Personal agency, share individual voices, get curious about the process
- Q: How do you feel recognized at work?
  - Goal: Understand feelings and needs
- Q: Who do you want to thank and why? How would you like to recognize them?
  - Goal: Meet the need for recognition and contribution

Improvement Tool(s): How to: Institute for Healthcare Improvement Conversation and Action

Guide

AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network





# Celebration Question:

- What has been your greatest accomplishment in the last 6 months?

# Additional Resources

- Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764380>
- Pandemic-Driven Posttraumatic Growth for Organizations and Individuals,  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2771807>
- Stress First Aid Toolkit for Long-Term Care Staff,  
<https://www.ithaca.edu/gerontology-institute/finger-lakes-geriatric-education-center/stress-first-aid>

# Wrap up

- Final comments or questions?
- Any topics you would like the faculty to discuss next week?
- We would like to learn from you! Please share your ideas for tests of change, success stories, challenges and innovations by emailing us.
- 1:1 and small group coaching is available from your coach and Training Center Team.

# Thank you!

**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network**

