

POWERFUL Self-Care

Practices to stay Flexible,
Compassionate & Open-minded



Moving towards
your edge

with... Jim Lucas, Helena Colodro Sola & Joe Oliver



ACBS World
Conference
DUBLIN, IRELAND
25-30 June, 2019

Disclosures (no support):

- Jim Lucas, Joe Oliver & Helena Colodro:
 - We have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation.

Who we are

Jim Lucas



Helena Colodro
Sola



Joe Oliver



OUTLINE

Today's Educational Objectives

Functional Analysis

Identifying 'Self-Stories' by exploring work-related struggles

Adding Flexibility & Compassion

Clarifying ways of applying SHORT & RETAINABLE Mindful-Self-Compassion and Psychological Flexibility to Stories of the Self

Cultivating New Ways of Being

Write a Self-Enquiry Journal to cultivate a healthy self-doubt

What is Self-Care?

We know, that you know what it is

The real problem is that we all struggle to do it!



IT TAKES GUTS
▲▲▲▲ TO BE ▲▲▲▲
GENTLE & KIND



The Smiths, 1986



Self-care = Self-Compassion

**Psychological
Flexibility**

Healthy Self-doubt

***Love Yourself
as a Person,
Doubt
Yourself as
a Therapist***



Helene Nissen-Lie et al.




True, deep and meaningful self-care requires us to turn towards pain and make space for vulnerability

**Our Self-Stories &
how we fail!**

Who are YOU?

How often do you succeed at being you?

A woman with short grey hair and glasses is smiling and looking towards another woman with long brown hair. They are in a professional setting, possibly an office or a meeting room, with large windows in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

Why is it so important?
Self-Care at work

wellbeing at
work

Burnout, depression and anxiety - why the NHS has a problem with staff health

Despite efforts from NHS England to improve the wellbeing of its staff, progress has been inconsistent and employee ill-health remains widespread

Sarah Johnson

Tue 25 Apr 2017
16.54 BST



4013



Advertisement

Adobe

THE FUTURE IS YOURS.
MAKE IT.

STUDENTS, SAVE 65%
ON CREATIVE CLOUD

Join now

832

Views

4

CrossRef citations

221

Altmetric

Original Article







Predictors of emotional exhaustion, disengagement and burnout among improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) practitioners

Sophie Westwood, Linda Morison , Jackie Allt & Nan Holmes

Pages 172-179 | Received 21 Jan 2016, Accepted 01 Dec 2016, Published online: 13 Jan 2017

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2016.1276540>

 Check for updates

 Full Article  Figures & data  References  Citations  Metrics  Reprints & Permissions

Get access



 Select Language 

Translator disclaimer

Abstract

Background: Among mental health staff, burnout has been associated with undesirable outcomes, such as physical and mental ill-health, high levels of staff turnover and poorer patient care.

Aims: To estimate the prevalence and predictors of burnout amongst Improving

15
minutes
to develop
your
research



We need to drill-down into experiences of burnout...
observe them and get curious so we can see where
to increase flexibility and compassion, and expand
our learning

BURNOUT

Exhaustion

Cynicism

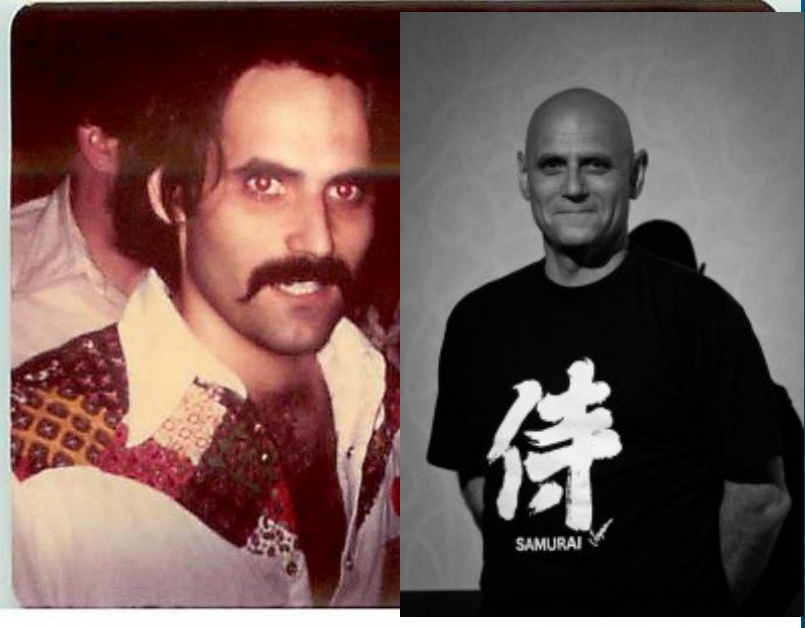
Self-doubt

**Why is Self-Care hard
for us?**

Culture & Evolution

And being an ACT Practitioner...

ACBS Legends we look up to...



We have a super cool tool box. That's creative, versatile, effective and underpinned by hardcore science.



Open

Aware

Active

Flexibility

ACT is...

WUCA

Volatile
Uncertain
Complex
Ambiguous

ACT Practitioners are:

Caring, sharing, warm (but not too warm), giving (but not a doormat!), assertive, in contact with values, mindful (at LEAST a 10 minute practice every day. Before yoga), defused (but savvy and skilled in RFT), vulnerable, open, accepting of flaws (but not too accepting, because, well, values), great a commitment action, always committed and lots of action. Did we mention self as context? It goes without saying that a good ACT practitioner knows what SAC is. And does it. Good.

And don't forget ACCEPTANCE. So good at acceptance. The best. Bring it on – we'll accept it.

**Look how I fail miserably to meet
this awesome ideal!**

**I'm getting fused, I shouldn't be
fused, I should defuse!!!**

**Arggh – I'm a terrible ACT
practitioner
(and human being...)**

“It’s not easy
being ~~green.~~”

an ACT therapist
—Kermit the Frog





“STOP TELLING ME TO HAVE ANOTHER F*CKING BUBBLE BATH!!”

Sometimes self-care isn't supposed to make you feel good

I'm the Best at ACT

AM
7
J36
2009

Adair
Filene
Koloski

WEAK & VULNERABLE

PCAH

TEPPER
AND
IVEY

REALLY FUCKED UP (like seriously...)

ROUTLEDGE

KESTER

STUPID: A COMPLETE CATALOGUE OF MY FAILINGS (VOL. 34)

CALIFORNIA

WEIL

TOTAL FRAUD

Smithsonian

Too Big, Too Loud, Too Much

CAPSTONE

I'M A TERRIBLE THERAPIST



Brief Fx Analysis of here and now:

1. What motivations have brought you here today?
2. What shows up that gets in the way of this?
3. How might you try to avoid or push away discomfort?
4. What is one thing you can do to stay flexible?



How might you try to avoid, put off or avoid discomfort today?

What's one thing you could do to stay flexible?

Me noticing

What shows up to get in the way?

What are your motivations for being here and now?



**OUR TOP 3 "MOST
DRAINING" WORK-RELATED
SITUATIONS**



WE ALL HAVE STORIES, **you**
are not alone



Sometim
insec

I AM TOO
MUCH

m
004



1

Jim's Story

"I've made too many promises and I have to keep them"

Fear & Guilty feelings

Ruminate, procrastinate

I'm inadequate

2

Helena's Story

"All my time has to be for work"

"If I don't use all my time for work, I am lazy"

"I am losing opportunities if I say no"

"Fear of missing out"

"My English level is not good enough"



3

Joe's Story

"I don't have anything much to offer"

"I'm not important"



The image shows the interior of a bus at night. The bus is filled with passengers, mostly seen from the back. The ceiling has several fans and colorful LED lights (green, red, orange). Large windows on both sides show a dark street outside with some lights. At the front of the bus, there are posters or advertisements on the wall. The overall atmosphere is dimly lit and busy.

What are your "most draining" work related situations?

What situations trigger your stories?

Work in small groups

“When do I get hooked to this story”

When the client shows discomfort in session

“What self-story is showing up?”

“I am a terrible therapist”

“How do I see myself reacting to this story?”

Stop the experience of the creative hopelessness

Explain the therapy rather than making the client experience it



**HOW DO YOU TRY TO
ESCAPE FROM THOSE
STORIES?**

**WHAT COULD YOU DO TO MOVE
TOWARDS WHAT'S IMPORTANT
TO YOU AS A THERAPIST AND
TOWARDS YOUR SELF-CARE?**

Me noticing

- WHAT THOUGHTS, FEELINGS OR SENSATION GET IN THE WAY OF MOVING TOWARD?
- WHAT'S THE STORY THAT SHOWS UP?
- IF YOU DIDN'T DO THIS BEHAV., WHAT FEELING WOULD YOU HAVE TO HOLD?

**WHAT IS
IMPORTANT TO YOU
AS A THERAPIST
AND FOR YOUR SELF
CARE?**



“Self care is recognizing that what you want to do and what is best for you are not always the same”

“Self love is acting on behalf of what is best for you, even if it doesn't temporarily satisfy you”

“Boundaries are how you allow the time and energy it takes to do the above”



What makes Self-Care powerful?

1. Create **functional variability** e.g. add self-compassion
2. Select **contextually-sensitive** functionally variable forms of action i.e. work for me, my group and system
3. Short repeated actions / exercises to **build retention**
i.e. 5 mins length

Self Enquiry

Getting deeper into your learning history

Cultivating Healthy Self-Doubt

“Open-mindedness is tribal glue”

Increases trust and safety

Builds harmony

Showing fallibility binds us





Open-mindedness works at multi-levels

...“it has evolved as a core means for establishing strong collaborative relationships with genetically dissimilar individuals and represents the cornerstone of all new living.”

Thomas Lynch, RO-DBT

Table sourced from RO-DBT, Thomas Lynch

Healthy Self-Doubt	Unhealthy Self-Doubt
Embrace a temporary state of openness to disconfirming or unexpected stimuli with the aim of learning	Fear self-examination and defend against it
You are able to consider your own view as possibly inaccurate or ineffective	Show disingenuous willingness to question, but privately your fuse with the belief 'I am right'.
Exercise humour at your own foibles with a sense of kindness and view all people as fallible.	Harbour anger and resentment and blame others you believe are responsible for triggering uncertainty in you or forcing unwanted self-examination
Take responsibility for actions and emotions by not giving up when challenged	You resist change or avoid/control situations where you might be challenged
Show willingness to learn from others and enhance relationships	Express passively e.g. sulk, pout, walk away, give-up, act helpless. This remains negative in its social impact.

What is Self-Enquiry?

Brief Daily
Practice (5 mins)

Mindfulness

Curiosity

Ask 'good' questions to find to
your edge (the unknown)

Openness

**Seek to understand your experiences in
new ways and develop new behaviours**

What is your 'edge'?

Struggling with a feeling

Ruminating about a problem or event

Strongly defending your response

Quickly rejecting feedback or criticism

Automatically agreeing with feedback or criticism

A Guide to the Process of **Self-Enquiry**

Describe
your
experience

Ask a 'Good'
Question

Did this take
you closer to
or further
away from
your edge?

The principle question is:

What do I need to
learn here?



Other useful questions:

Is the resistance, dislike and tension I am feeling helpful? What might these feelings tell me I need to learn here?

If I stay slow and allow this experience to be here, what rules about how I should behave show up?

What is feeling telling me I've learned?

What do these sensations suggest I am resisting?

Do I find myself wanting to automatically explain, defend, or discount another person's feedback or what is happening? If yes or maybe, then is this a sign that I may not be truly open?



Shaping Self-Compassion



So, what is the most powerful self-care tool in the entire universe?

Over to Joe

The most powerful self-care tool in the world?

What small actions can you take to express these personal qualities?

What personal qualities do you want to express when you are struggling?

What do you tend to do when influenced by "unhelpful" thoughts or self-stories?

What thoughts or self-stories about YOU show up when you are struggling?

FREE Ebook

<https://contextualconsulting.co.uk/act-therapist-guide-to-self-care-e-book>

