

# RESILIENCE

JENNY BULBULIA

# Your Wellbeing Matters

- The “person of the doctor” is the most powerful drug that a doctor gives his/her patient (Balint)
- The “self of the counselor” is the fundamental tool of therapy (Arvay)

# There can be a “cost to caring”...



# Burnout

A 38 year-old associate in a large legal firm reported feeling frustrated that so much of his time was taken up completing paper work and chasing fees. He was “swamped” by the bureaucracy of the job. He felt unavailable to act on behalf of his clients let alone keep up with new case law and emerging trends in the law. He felt unproductive, exhausted and not in control of his own career.

*“I dread falling asleep on Sunday evenings as I know what is in store for me once I awaken...”*

Rasmussen (2012) [narrative adapted]

# Vicarious Trauma

*“I bet I know how this case is going to turn out. The father is probably molesting the daughter, the mother has abandoned her emotionally, and everyone else is looking the other way ... I can't believe I am saying this. I used to believe that most people are trustworthy. Now I believe just the opposite”.*

(McCann & Pearlman, 1990)

# Compassion Fatigue

*“Compassion fatigue – I don’t know what it is but I know I got it. Sometimes I come home from my job and I just sit and stare. I tell my kids ‘Mommy can’t talk for a while’”*

(Fahy, 2007)

# Consequences

- Compromised care of client
- Deleterious effects for practitioners
- Decreased productivity
- Absenteeism
- Poor Professional Judgment
- Reputational Risks – personally, professionally, organisationally

# Potential Career “Flashpoints”

- Stage of Career - Transition Periods
- Life getting in the way – eg. divorce, death, illness
- Client Factors/type of practice
- Workplace Environment
- Stretched Resources



# But....

Being affected by the work and being impaired as a consequence may not necessarily follow where there are positive moderating factors to which practitioners have recourse at a personal, professional and organisational level

(Bulbulia et al. 2015)

## “An Armoury of Resilience”

# Is this Resilience?

- A dynamic, evolving process of positive attitudes and effective strategies in response to a stressful event (Jensen et al., 2008)
- Coping effectively in the face of adversity (Bonanno, 2004)
- Responding to stress in a healthy way at minimal psychological and physical cost (Epstein & Krasner, 2013)
- A two dimensional construct including the experience of adverse conditions and the presence of positive skills in coping with these conditions (Beddoe, Davys Adamson 2013)
- Wholehearted engagement with, not withdrawal from, the often harsh realities of the workplace (Epstein & Krasner, 2013)

Or rather than attempting to achieve ‘conceptual clarity’ or a consensus of meaning, resilience should be considered a rubric or ‘umbrella term”

(Grant & Kinman, 2013)

# “Rethinking Regulation”

*“We need to understand more fully, of course, the circumstances that support the ongoing resilience of the vast majority of professionals.”*

(PSA, 2015)

You wouldn't like me  
when I'm angry...

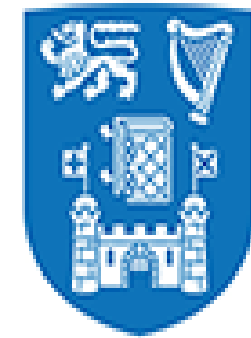
Because I always back up  
my rage with facts and  
documented sources.

*-The Credible Hulk*



# Fostering Resilience at a personal, professional and organisational level: an international study of registered social workers

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# A strengths based approach

If 1 in 5 physicians are affected by burnout, what are the other 4 doing right...?

(Zwack & Schweitzer, 2013)

- Mixed Method Design
- 852 registered social workers
- Ireland, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and 3 Canadian Provinces – Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario



## Let's call her Shirley ...

Resilience – **Low**

Compassion Satisfaction - **Low** Compassion Fatigue - **Ave**

- Self-Compassion **Low**
- Coping Style **Positive**
- Defence Mechanism **Neurotic**
- Work Engagement **Low**
- POS **Low**
- Training **B/O ✓ Resilience X**
- Supervision **Monthly Inadequate**

## Let's call her Vicky ...

Resilience – High

Compassion Satisfaction - High Compassion Fatigue - Average

- Self-Compassion High
- Coping Style Positive
- Defence Mechanism Mature
- Work Engagement Average/High
- POS Average
- Training B/O ✓ Resilience ✓
- Supervision Monthly Adequate

# Why is Resilience Important...

Minimises Harm

Promotes Personal and Professional Wellbeing,  
Equilibrium and Balance

# What is Resilience ...

- **Awareness**
- **Balance**
- **Containment**

# What supports practitioner's resilience

- Personal
  - Self-Compassion
  - Leaving Work at Work
- Professional
  - Training – undergraduate and CPD
  - Supervision / Reflective Spaces
- Organisational
  - Workplace Cohesion

# Is “Resilience” always a Good Thing?

*“Be like the headland on which the waves continuously crash: it stands firm and gathers the waters around it to rest”*

(Marcus Aurelius)

*“When the wind catches the corn, it does not stand stiff and direct against the force of the wind: were it to do this, the wind would rip it asunder. No. The corn weaves with the wind, it bends low. And when the wind is gone, it weaves back and finds its own poise and balance again.”*

(John O’Donohue)

*“Although there are no easy answers to maintaining emotional health in the face of the significant challenges posed by providing care to others, I suggest that our first order of business ought always to be ensuring our own optimal care. Only then can we optimally care for others.”*

(Rasmussen, 2012)

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