

Just Keep Swimming!

The Importance of
Mental Health in the
Financial Aid Profession

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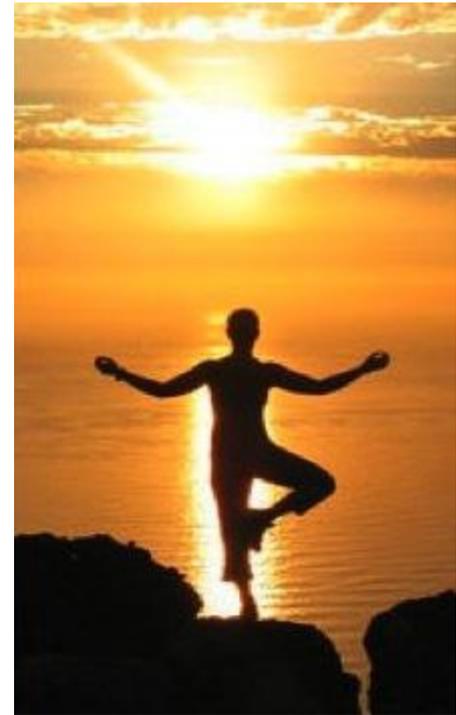
How do we define *Mental Health*?

MentalHealth.gov –

- *Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.*

Balance

Resilience



Stress

American Institute of Stress

- www.stress.org/workplace-stress
- Discusses numerous research studies on workplace stress from 1987 through 2000
- Consistent themes
 - Job stress is more strongly associated with health complaints than financial or family problems
 - Workers who feel stress on the job say they need help in learning how to manage stress
 - Some workers have felt like screaming, shouting, or crying because of job stress
 - Some workers share concerns about workplace violence due to stress
 - American workers are working longer and harder
 - Absenteeism due to job stress has escalated
 - Stress due to job insecurity has skyrocketed

Proactive stress management

Defined work-week (stop early/late days, weekends)

Take allocated vacation and sick time

Take lunch break away from your desk

Eat healthy/Exercise

Conversation with a friend

- No texting or facebook
- Might not be a spouse or family member

Seek assistance from a counselor/therapist

Practice Self-Compassion

Learn to *Let It Go!*



When does stress become too much?

Recognizing the signs of a nervous breakdown

www.bridgestorecovery.com

- Panic attacks
- Depressive symptoms
- Mood swings
- Insomnia
- Social isolation
- Feeling detached from yourself
- Hallucinations
- Difficulty concentrating
- Avoiding others
- Missing work or school
- Fall behind on maintaining your home
- Unusual, impulsive decisions
- Demonstrating invincible behavior
- Suicidal thoughts/ideation

“The Importance of Having a Breakdown”

“The reason we break down is that we have not, over years flexed very much. There were things we needed to hear inside our minds that we deftly put to one side, there were messages we needed to heed, bits of emotional learning and communicating we didn’t do – and now, after being patient for so long, far too long, the emotional self is attempting to make itself heard in the only way it now knows how. It has become entirely desperate – and we should understand and even sympathise with its mute rage. What the breakdown is telling us above anything else is that it must no longer be business as usual – that things have to change or (and this can be properly frightening to witness) that death might be preferable.”

-- The Book of Life/The School of Life, London

Personal reflections . . .



*Belle,
I have come
to collect
your father...*

Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery

One thing at a time, one day at a time

Focus on me first (oxygen mask)

- Be selfish!

LAUGH! SMILE!

Accept the love and support that others offer

Accept myself!

Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery

Journal my feelings

- Identify “feeling words,” not “pizza words”

Eliminate the word “failure” from my vocabulary

End the day recalling successes/positives

Find ways to not feel lonely, even though I may be in circumstances in which I am alone.

Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery

Communication

- Assertive, not aggressive
 - *“I feel ___ when you ___ because*”
- Honest communication
 - “Love without truth is not good, nor is truth without love.”
- Don’t stuff your feelings

Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery

Thinking

- Overcome fatalistic, twisted thinking
 - *“I will never win.”*
 - *“Johnny failed Biology because he couldn’t buy the textbook in time because I did not process his verification paperwork on time”*
- Positive Self-Talk
 - *“I am a person of WORTH! I am a person of VALUE!”*
 - *“I am not a bad person trying to get good; I am a GREAT person who got distracted.”*
- Don’t “should” on yourself
 - *“I should have called Suzy one more time so she would have understood how to complete the MPN and not get dropped.”*

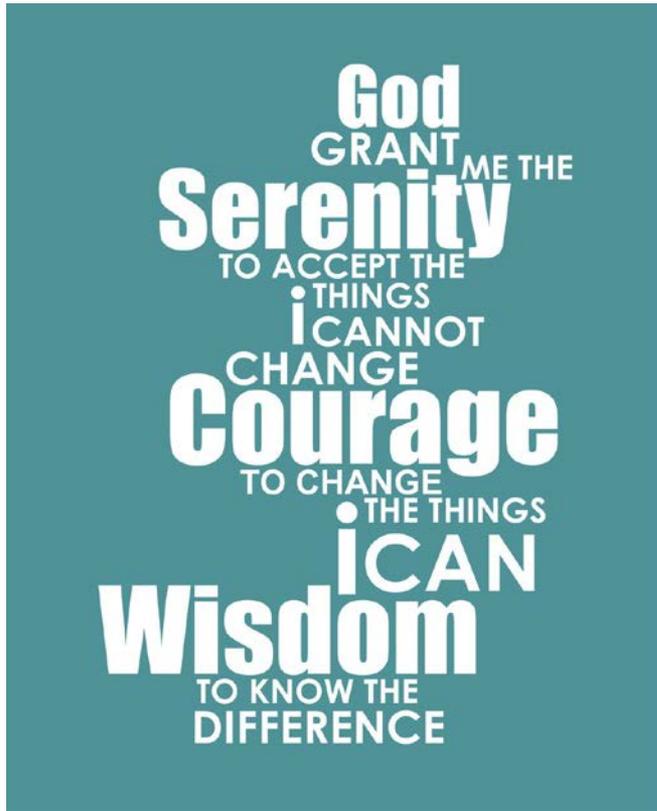
Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery

Crazy?

- *Origin – Norse (1400s) – “shatter”*
- *English (1580s) – “full of cracks”*
- *Change the perspective – from the inside*



Lessons Learned / Tips for Recovery



Just for Today...

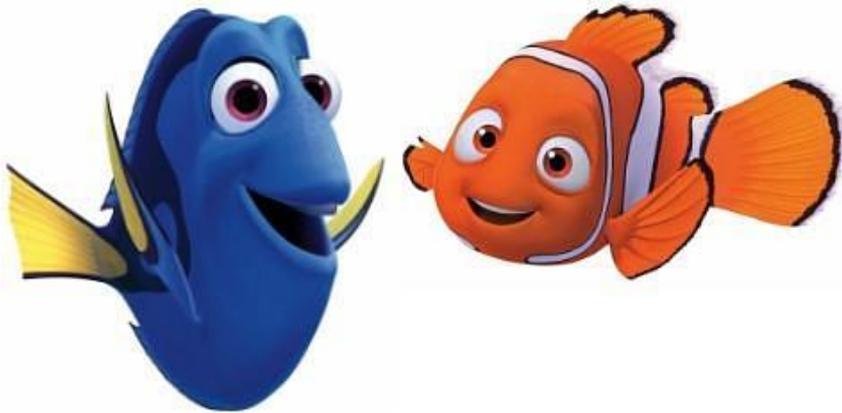
The Choice is Mine

-Emotions Anonymous



Where to find help . . .

**1-800-273-8255
(TALK)**



www.NAMI.org