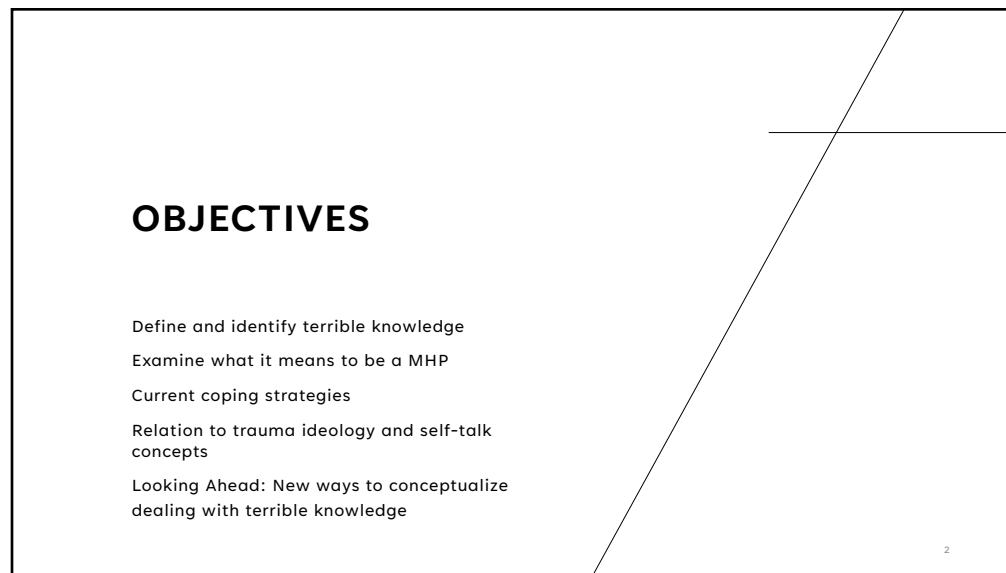




1



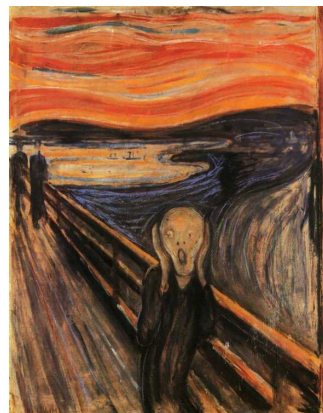
2

TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

3

3

WHAT IS “TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE?”



4

4

BUT FIRST...

Let us consider a more basic question:

5

5

WHAT IS THE IMAGE OF A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL?

When an average person hears the words “social worker” or
“licensed professional counselor” or “psychologist” etc. ---

What do you think an average person envisions?

6

6

MEET SOCIAL WORKER BARBIE



7

7

MEET COUNSELOR KEN



8

8

BUT HOW DO WE IN THE PROFESSION VIEW OURSELVES?

Hmmm....

9

9

MEET REAL-LIFE STRESSED-OUT MH PROF BARBIE & KEN



10

OUR PROFESSIONS ARE “DIFFERENT”

We are not selling vacuum cleaners.
The challenges and ramifications of
our day-to-day work are different
than selling vacuum cleaners.



11

11

TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

12

12

WHAT IS “TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE?”

- Material that is both emotionally and intellectually difficult
- It’s when horror movie heroes put all the pieces together and realize that something frightening, upsetting or disturbing is there, which until that moment was hidden or obscured, e.g. “The call is coming from INSIDE the house!!!”

13

13

MALADAPTIVE RESPONSES TO TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

- Callousness
- Inappropriate humor
- Blaming the victim
- Despair
- Denial
- Disgust

14

14

DISCUSSION TIME

Without naming names, places, or other identifying information, what are some examples of terrible knowledge you have experienced in your career thus far? Please always respect clients' confidentiality!

How did you handle it? What did you do about it?

15

15

HOW DOES TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE AFFECT YOU?



16

16

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

- Decrease in professional effectiveness
- Decrease in empathy and sympathy
- Decrease in physical health, energy, and vigor
- Decrease in social interactions
- Increase in isolation or withdrawal from others
- Depression
- Anger
- In general, terrible knowledge may make you feel simply terrible

17

17

ANOTHER KIND OF TERRIBLE

- Are there “terrible” therapists?
- Predators? Unwanted physical contact?
- Poorly trained?
- Extremely inexperienced?
- What do you do if you have “terrible knowledge” of this sort of therapist?
- See 2021 NASW Code of Ethics Sec 2.08, 2.09 and 2.10

18

18

SOME RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF TRAUMA SPECIALISTS

- Some research studies showed no signs of trauma-specific long term negative effects such as secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization and traumatic countertransference
- A **supportive professional environment** made the difference between growth and burnout

19

19

SEVEN WAYS THERAPISTS MAY PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

1. Compartmentalization, or “gift box” visualization
2. Mindfulness and Movement
3. Imagery
4. Release of Feelings
5. Peer Consultation/Therapy
6. Supervisor Consultation
7. Boundaries/Ethics Review

20

20

2021 NASW CODE OF ETHICS: NEW LANGUAGE IN THE PURPOSE SECTION

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity.

Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers' self-care

21

21

THE ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN ADAPTIVE COPING

- The word “resilience” is from the Latin “resilire” literally meaning to refuse; also - to go back to the previous state.
- Another definition states: “It is the capacity for something to withstand great impact of temperature and pressure and to be able to recover and return to its previous form.”

22

22

5 COMPONENTS OF PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE

1. Self-control
2. Reinvention
3. Fortification
4. Self-perception
5. Connections

Ancient Wisdom Extra: “Shared joy is double joy; Shared sorrow is half a sorrow. — Swedish proverb.

23

23

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS RESPONSE

- Review the basic initial facts: who, what, where, when
- Review what are the normal responses
- Review what you did next, to whom did you speak afterwards, what happened after that, how did you feel, etc.
- Establish a follow-up self-care plan

How is this similar to a strategy for dealing with
terrible knowledge?

24

24

ROLE OF SELF-TALK IN DEALING WITH TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE

“What to Say When You Talk to Yourself”

by Shad Helmstetter, PhD, 1986, 2017



25

25

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

- Positive self-talk has evolved from a basic self-help technique to a more enlightened understanding of the brain's role in human behavior and how it works in our lives
- The fastest and strongest way to wire our brains is repetition
- We all want the same basic things: success, happiness, and in this workshop, an effective way to deal with terrible knowledge
- Ancient wisdom states “As a man thinketh, so is he.” – Proverbs 23:7
- “We are shaped by our thought; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.” -Buddha

26

26

PROGRAMMED...NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE?

- Our brains are like a blank computer at birth; we are programmed in direct and indirect ways
- Our sense of self is derived from (1) what we accept from others and (2) what we say when we talk to ourselves
- Growing up in an average household, a child hears “no” or is told not to do something 148,000 times.
- Can you recall how many times you were told about your strengths and what you could accomplish?

27

27

PROGRAMMED...NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE?

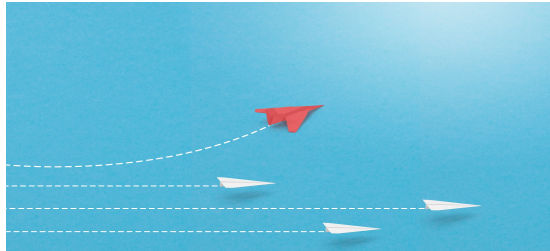
- The author (Helmstetter) wanted to be in the school band at age 12. After his audition, he overheard the band director saying not only could he not play in the band, but that he had NO musical ability and would never be able to play an instrument!
- It worked. He believed it. He accepted it. It wasn't until 20 years later he tackled the piano and learned it secretly.
- On the other hand, another six-year-old boy visited an elderly gentleman in the neighborhood often. He overheard him tell his mother that he was very creative and would one day grow up to do very creative things. He eventually became the Dean of Disney University.

28

28

WHAT PERCENT IS NEGATIVE? ARE YOU SURE???

- As adults, on a daily basis, we give ourselves negative messages about 77% of the time!
- What if you boarded a plane and were told that the plane has been programmed so that 77% of the directions that will control the plane are the wrong directions?



29

SO WHAT MESSAGES ARE WE GIVING OURSELVES ABOUT TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE?

- We need to pay attention to our messages.
 - For a “new idea” to stick and be long-lasting, it needs to be repeated repeatedly.
 - “It isn’t the pen, it’s the writer.” “It isn’t the road, it’s the runner.”
- Three key aspects:
1. New idea has to become physically wired into the brain
 2. Understand how your brain gets wired and the role you play in wiring.
 3. A new word for word set of directions and new programming for conscious and subconscious minds

30

30

WHAT WOULD ONE THERAPEUTIC GOAL BE WITH THE FOLLOWING CLIENTS?

- One who experienced a significant earthquake
- One who was caught in a nearly 24-hour blackout in a major city and took nearly 8 hours to return to a secure place
- One whose home and belongings were destroyed in a hurricane



31

31

SO...

If we work with our clients with the goal of them NOT defining themselves solely or primarily by their own terrible knowledge...

“You are not the event.”

“The bad things that happened do not totally define you. You are more than just the bad things that happened.”

Then...shouldn't we as counselors adopt that same philosophy?

32

32

BUT BESIDES “TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE,” A MH
PROFESSIONAL ALSO HAS...

COMPASSION
HOPE
EXPERTISE

33

33

BESIDES “TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE,” A MH PROFESSIONAL
ALSO HAS...

EXPERIENCE
SKILL
EMPATHY

34

34

WITH THIS “CHEESE,” IT’S GOUDA BRIE A GRATE DAY!

Compassion

Hope

Expertise

Experience

Skill

Empathy

35

35

SUMMARY

After accepting that terrible knowledge is part of our job, we can adapt healthy approaches, ensuring that it does not define us. We embrace the ethic of self-care as vital and recognize the “cheesy” qualities we possess to do these jobs. Using the techniques of self-talk, we can achieve even more positive and healthier results for ourselves and our clients.

36

36

WE ARE NOT SELLERS OF VACUUM CLEANERS...



37

37

BECAUSE LET'S FACE IT...

THAT JOB WOULD REALLY SUCK!



38

38

A FINAL WORD FROM THE WISE

