

Life NOW Workbook

A Coaching Program

This program was developed by a collaborative group of individuals with a desire to make the world a better place. This group believed that health care workers, teachers and first responders play critical roles in the difficult times we are living in. They thought that if we could find a way to help these everyday heroes check-in with a colleague trained to listen and support them, then they could stand strong and be the example that their communities need. Then, the health of their community would improve, and people would feel safe and show more kindness toward themselves and others.

Introduction

This workbook introduces Life NOW worksheets offered from the Life Now service; a telehealth service provided by frontline workers by frontline workers. It includes several handouts for individuals to fill out, assess and identify areas of strength and areas of need. Feel free to print off pages and track progress made through time.

The Life NOW service is a coaching program rather than a psychotherapy service. The service is founded upon the idea that most people only need a nudge, a kind word, and perhaps a new idea to manage impacts of daily living. Key to the success of this program is its accessibility, which aims to be same day, every day.

Contextual Interview and Assessment

Please take a moment to look at how you are doing in the important areas of your life. See if there's been a change in your life and the overall picture may help you decide what you want to target in today's plan to improve your quality of life.

The rating scale goes from 1 to 10. Please select a lower number (1-4) to indicate the area of need or a higher number (6-10) to indicate an area which is good/not needing focus. Let's start with love, as you experience in friendships.

Love – friendships

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs work</i>								<i>Good here</i>	

Love – intimate partner or family members

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs work</i>								<i>Good here</i>	

Work – satisfaction, sense of control, meaningfulness

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs work</i>								<i>Good here</i>	

Play – fun activities, relaxation activities, spiritual practice, hobbies

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs work</i>								<i>Good here</i>	

Health – alcohol, drugs, tobacco, caffeine, eating habits, exercise, sleep

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs work</i>								<i>Good here</i>	

Of these 5 areas, which one might be calling out for your attention at this time?

Life NOW Tip Sheet

Life is precious, and every moment counts!

Life, more now than ever before, requires us to have strong coping skills to be the leaders we want to be in our communities. Here are some of the skills that we offer in the Life NOW service.

To help ourselves live the life we want to live, we need to learn and practice Life NOW skills. These three skills are core areas for this program, and we recommend them to most callers.

		<i>When life is difficult, it helps to live NOW</i>
N	Notice	What is going on in this moment? Inside you? Outside of you? Describe 3 things that you see or hear right now. Name 3 things you feel at this moment. Without judgement, just notice and describe.
O	Orient	Pause and reflect on what matters most in this moment. Do you matter the most? Does someone else? Does action matter? What action? Is stillness or silence better than talking or doing something that shows what matters to you? After orienting, lean in and go with your plan.
W	Work-around	Work around barriers to noticing and orienting and perhaps prioritize solutions that you can pursue for the long term. Life is long, and it's all about look at the barriers and working with them. Sometimes, it's enough to just know the barrier; you don't have to push it down. Sometimes, in knowing a barrier, you start to see a way to walk around it. The walk might take a little more time than battling the barrier, and you have time. Be gentle with yourself. You are worth it!

Building Personal Resilience

The following list contains characteristics that combine to form resilience. Check off all items which now describe you.

	I have a good self-concept.
	I have good self-esteem.
	I am sensitive to the needs of others.
	I am generally cooperative with others.
	I am socially responsive.
	I have a good sense of humor.
	I am able to postpone getting my needs met (I can delay gratification).
	I am generally flexible.
	I can control my impulses when I need to do so.
	I believe in the future and plan for it.
	I have a good support system.
	I recognize that I have many opportunities available to me.
	I respect individual human beings.
	I respect appropriate authority.
	I am able to look for more than one solution to a problem.
	I am able to plan ahead.
	I have hobbies and interests beyond my traumas.
	I have a positive view of life and see life's joys (as well as its sorrow).
	I can problem solve and have a strategy which I use.
	I have a sense of spirituality
	I celebrate myself regularly.
	I celebrate others regularly.
	I believe that I have some level of control over myself and others.
	I would rather take action than wait for something to happen to me.
	I am able to find meaning even in the bad things.
	I am someone others like and love.
	I am able to find someone to help me when I need it.
	I can ask questions in a creative way.
	I have a conscience that allows me to see my own goodness.
	I have a "knowing" about things that happen to and around me.
	I can disengage and separate from others if they are not good for me.
	I can attach to others and connect.

<u>Checking Your Basic Needs</u>			
Basic Self-Care Needs	Yes	No	Goal
Do I usually get enough sleep?			
Do I usually eat something fresh & unprocessed every day?			
Do I allow time in my week to touch nature, no matter how briefly?			
Do I get enough sunlight, especially in wintertime?			
Do I see my medical practitioner at least once per year?			
Do I see a dentist every six months?			
Do I get regular sexual thrills?			
Do I get enough <i>fun</i> exercise?			
Am I hugged and touched amply?			
Do I make time for friendships?			
Do I nurture my friendships?			
Do I have friends I can call when I am down, friends who really listen?			
Can I honestly ask for help when I need it?			
Do I regularly release negative emotions in a healthy manner?			
Do I forgive myself when I make mistakes?			
Do I do things that give me a sense of fulfillment, joy and purpose?			
Is there abundant beauty in my life?			
Do I allow myself to see beauty and to bring beauty into home and office?			
Do I make time for solitude?			
Am I getting daily or weekly spiritual nourishment?			
Can I remember the last time I laughed until I cried?			
Do I accept myself for who I am?			

Checking Your Basic Needs At Work			
Adapted from Life Makeovers (2000) by Cheryl Richardson			
Basic Self-Care Needs At Work	Yes	No	Goal/Comments/Reflections:
Do I take a lunch break every day and do something unrelated to work?			
Do I work reasonable hours?			
Do I schedule “breathing room” every day so I can step back, and reevaluate my priorities?			
Is my office clutter free?			
Do I have adequate lighting and clean air?			
Do I delegate work to free my time and empower others?			
Do my family/friends honor my work time? If not, have I asked them?			
Do I have blocks of uninterrupted time without distractions and interruptions?			
Do I have a DO NOT DISTURB sign?			
Have I scheduled specific times for returning phone calls and checking e-mails?			
Have I stopped taking on more than I can handle?			
Do I drink enough water when I am at work?			
Do I have comfortable shoes at my office?			
Do I schedule time off from work (sick leave and/or vacation time) to take care of myself?			
Do I have someone to talk with about my professional life?			
Do I have creature comforts that make my office pleasant? (music & other sounds, aroma, artwork)			
Do I say yes to commitments that I later regret?			

<u>Healthy Coping Strategies</u>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Write things down • Make small, daily decisions • See decisions you are already making • Give yourself permission to ask for help • Plan for future • Get the most information you can to help make decisions • Anticipate needs • Remember you have options • Review previous success • Problem-solve • Have a “Plan B” • Break large tasks into smaller ones 	<p style="text-align: center;">Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow yourself to experience what you feel • Label what you are experiencing • Give yourself permission to ask for help • Be assertive when necessary • Keep communication open with others • Remember you have options • Use your sense of humor • Have a buddy with whom you can vent • Use “positive” words and language 	<p style="text-align: center;">Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time by yourself • Spend time with others • Limit demands on time & energy • Help others with tasks • Give yourself permission to ask for help • Do activities that you previously enjoyed • Take different routes to work or on trips • Remember you have options • Find new activities that are enjoyable and (mildly) challenging • Set goals, create a plan • Relax • Practice, Practice, Practice
<p style="text-align: center;">Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss changed beliefs with spiritual leader • Meditation • Practice rituals of your faith/spirituality/beliefs • Spiritual retreats/workshops • Prayer • Remember you have options • Mindfulness • Find spiritual support • Read literature 	<p style="text-align: center;">Interpersonal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to enjoy time with trusted friend/partner • Hugs • Healthy boundaries • Remember to use “I” statements • Use humor to diffuse tense conversations • Play together • Apologized when stress causes irritable behavior or outbursts • State needs and wants as clearly as possible 	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerobic exercise • See doctor and dentist • Routine sleep pattern • Minimize caffeine, alcohol & sugar • Eat well-balanced, regular meals • Drink water • Wear comfortable clothes • Engage in physical luxuries: spa, massages, bath, exercise trainer • Remember to breathe-deeply • Take mini-breaks

Measuring Life Stress

Event	Scale of Impact	Event	Scale of Impact
Death of a spouse	100	Son or daughter leaving home	29
Divorce	73	Change in responsibility at work	29
Marital Separation	65	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Jail term	63	Spouse begins/stops work	26
Death of close family member	63	Begin or end school	26
Personal injury or illness	53	Change in living conditions	25
Marriage	50	Revision of personal habits	24
Fired at work	47	Trouble with boss	23
Marital reconciliation	45	Change in work hours or conditions	20
Retirement	45	Change in residence	20
Change in health of family member	44	Change in schools	20
Pregnancy	39	Change in recreation	19
Sex difficulties	39	Change in church activity	19
Gain of new family member	39	Change in social activity	18
Business adjustment	39	Small mortgage or loan	17
Change in financial stated	38	Change in sleep habits	16
Death of close friend	37	Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change to a different line of work	36	Change in eating habits	15
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	Vacation	13
High mortgage	31	Christmas	12
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	31	Minor violations of the law	11
Trouble with in-laws	29	TOTAL SCORE:	

Instructions: Circle the number of any event which has occurred in your life over the past 12 months. Add up the numbers for your total score.

Professional Quality of Life

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people’s lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last 30 days.

0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often 5=Very Often

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>___ 1. I am happy.</p> <p>___ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.</p> <p>___ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to help people.</p> <p>___ 4. I feel connected to others.</p> <p>___ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</p> <p>___ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.</p> <p>___ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a helper.</p> <p>___ 8. I am losing sleep over a person I help’s traumatic experiences.</p> <p>___ 9. I think I might have been “infected” by the traumatic stress of those I help.</p> <p>___ 10. I feel trapped by my work as a helper.</p> <p>___ 11. Because of my helping, I have felt “on edge” about various things.</p> <p>___ 12. I like my work as a helper.</p> <p>___ 13. I feel depressed as a result of my work as a helper.</p> <p>___ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have helped.</p> <p>___ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.</p> <p>___ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.</p> | <p>___ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.</p> <p>___ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.</p> <p>___ 19. Because of my work as a helper, I feel exhausted.</p> <p>___ 20. I have happy thoughts/feelings about those I help & how I could help them.</p> <p>___ 21. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or the size of my caseload I have to deal with.</p> <p>___ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.</p> <p>___ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I help.</p> <p>___ 24. I plan to be a helper for a long time.</p> <p>___ 25. As a result of my helping, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.</p> <p>___ 26. I feel “bogged down” by the system.</p> <p>___ 27. I have thoughts that I am “success” as a helper.</p> <p>___ 28. I can’t recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.</p> <p>___ 29. I am an unduly sensitive person.</p> <p>___ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.</p> |
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B. Hudnall Stamm, 2003. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction Subscales, R-III. (Pro-QOL). <http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm>. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, & (c) it is not sold. <http://www.isu.edu/~bhstamm>.

How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots. Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true of you. Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply to you—for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

	Always	Sometimes	Never		
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get 7-8 hours of sleep at least four nights per week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles, on whom I can rely on.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes per day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcohol drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious/spiritual beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am in good health (including eye-sight/hearing/teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems (ex: chores & money).	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something fun at least once per week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of caffeinated beverages per day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring Instructions: to calculate your score, add up the figures and subtract 20.

FINAL SCORE: _____

Interpretations:

- Score **below 10** indicates excellent resistance to stress.
- Score **over 30** indicates some vulnerability to stress.
- Score **over 50** indicates serious vulnerability to stress.

Traumatic Stress & Secondary Trauma

The causes of traumatic stress and of secondary or vicarious trauma differ and are varied, but many of the common reactions or signs and symptoms are shared or are very similar. You may have been exposed to a traumatic event first-hand or experienced it through close association with another person or place – or even a similar previous experience.

The normal stress reaction can be quite unpleasant and can even cause us to become concerned about our physical and mental capacity. Most of the time the reaction is acute, and we work our way through it over a period of a few days to a few weeks. Many of the manifestations of the stress reaction are biochemical and indicate a normal human process (it is supposed to happen). That does not make it comfortable. It is often quite uncomfortable and though we cannot prevent it from happening (remember it is normal) we can influence how severe it becomes and how long it lasts.

Below is a partial list of the most common signs and symptoms of traumatic stress and vicarious trauma. Most people experience one or more signs from each column, creating their own “personal stress reaction”. Your stress reaction may not be the same as a friend or co-worker who had the same or a similar exposure to you – it is personal.

At the bottom of this sheet are some ideas that have been shown to help mitigate the symptoms of the stress reaction. If your stress reaction does not get better after two to three weeks, or if part of your reaction gets “stuck” and does not go away, it means you should reach out for some help. It does not indicate a serious problem, just that you may need some coaching to get things moving in the right direction. Do not hesitate to reach out for help from a trained professional.

Common Warning Signs of Traumatic Stress & Secondary Trauma				
PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIORAL	SPIRITUAL
Exhaustion	Blaming	Exhaustion	Withdrawal	Anger at God
Insomnia	Confusion	Negative self-image	↑ Alcohol	Spiritual uncertainty
Headaches	Δ Alertness	Depression	↑ Self Med	Alienation
Sore back & neck	Loss of orientation	↑ Anxiety	Avoidance	Crisis of Faith
Irritable Bowel	Hypervigilance	↑ Anger	Binge TV	↑ Awareness
Other GI issues	Δ Awareness	↓ Sympathy	↑ Trauma Media	↑ Religious rites
Rash, breakouts	Memory problems	Depersonalization	Anger	Forced gratefulness
Grinding teeth	Dreams/nightmares	↑ Emot. triggers	↑ Irritability	Isolation
Heart palp.	↑ Sensitivity	Irrational fears	↓ Communications	Sense of betrayal
Muscle Tremors	↑ Critical	Dread of working	Avoid social events	Meaninglessness
Fatigue	Intrusive images	w/certain clients	↓ Libido	? Providence
Thirst	↓ Attention	↓ Enjoyment	↑ Gossip/venting	Δ observance
Muscle twitches	↓ Concentration		Binge eating	Δ engagement
↓ Equilibrium	↓ Problem solving		Impaired eating	
↑ Sweating	Poor decisions			
Things That Help (for Yourself & for Others)				
Physical exercise & relaxation	Reach out – people do care	Avoid alcohol, drugs		
Structure your time	Maintain normal schedule	Avoid sugar & caffeine		
TALK to people	Check in with each other	Spend time with people		
Treat yourself special	Keep a journal	Don't fight the dreams, images		
Do something you enjoy	Eat well balanced meals	TRY to get rest		
Listen carefully	Offer your help	Help with everyday tasks		
Spend time with the person	Reassure the person	Give space but do not ignore		
Don't take anger etc. personally	Stay available	Be accepting		

