

Working with Diverse Audiences Over Time

Unit 6

A six-part curriculum designed to assist Extension professionals in planning and implementing more effective programs to reach diverse audiences

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Unit 6

Working with Diverse Audiences Over Time

An Overview

Not all ethnically diverse individuals are multi-need, just as not all mainstream audiences are multi-need. Oftentimes the terms “diverse” and “multi-need” are used interchangeably.

Unfortunately, when these terms are used in this way, it immediately reinforces stereotypes that diversity is synonymous with poverty or need. In this curriculum, the term multi-need refers to individuals who face a variety of socioeconomic barriers that keep them from functioning successfully. Multi-need individuals have numerous problems or issues, many of which can be resolved, given the right resources. Professionals who work closely with multi-need audiences find themselves devoting much time and resources to trying to assist these individuals.

Due to the high demand on these professionals, burnout is a reality. Often a desire to assist turns into a draining experience for professionals who do not remember to give themselves perspective and space. Extension professionals who work with these groups often develop feelings of anxiety, depression, irritability, sleeplessness, etc., in an unconscious process in which the client’s symptoms are taken on by the practitioner. This occurs because the professional wants to help the client get better; however, in so doing, the professional’s need/desire to “help” the client may unconsciously override the actual needs of the client. Burnout is very common in professions that work with multi-need audiences/clients.

Likewise, Extension professionals can become disenchanted when trying to work with new ethnic groups. Extension professionals may reach out to these audiences but fail to see adequate participation. This can occur for many reasons, such as lack of culturally relevant programs (discussed in Unit 2), inappropriate marketing techniques (discussed in Unit 3), or failure to connect with the audience (discussed in Unit 4). Sometimes, even the best efforts fail, for reasons outside of the Extension professionals’ control. This can lead to frustration, dissatisfaction, and, ultimately, burnout.

Almost everyone involved in Extension starts out full of enthusiasm, but some eventually become cynical, discouraged, and/or depressed, for the reasons discussed earlier (and sometimes for other reasons). These may be the signs of burnout. Burnout usually starts out as emotional fatigue, followed by depersonalization, which subsequently develops to feelings of reduced personal and/or job accomplishment. However, there are ways to prevent burnout and cope with difficult jobs.

This unit will focus on providing strategies that can help Extension professionals work with hard-to-reach audiences or in high-stress environments. Lesson 1 focuses on strategies for avoiding burnout when working with multi-need (limited resource) audiences over time. Lesson 2 focuses on strategies for working with ethnically diverse and multi-need (limited-resource) audiences over time.

Unit 6: Working with Diverse Audiences Over Time

Facilitator's Guide to Lesson 1

Lesson title: Avoiding Burnout when Working with Multi-need Audiences

Goal: To recognize the symptoms of burnout and discover the ways to avoid burnout.

Objectives: After participating in this lesson, participants will be able to discuss:

- Warning signs of burnout;
- Strategies for avoiding burnout; and
- Community resources for referrals.

Materials Needed:

Flipchart

Markers

Attachments 6.1 through 6.3

Time Needed: Approximately 1 1/2 hours

Background:

Burnout has been described as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that results from constant or repeated emotional pressure associated with an intense, long-term involvement with people (Corey & Corey, 2003). It is often characterized by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness and by a negative view of self and negative attitudes toward work, life and/or other people. Burnout results in feelings of depression, loss of morale, feelings of isolation, reduced productivity, and a decreased capacity to cope (Corey & Corey, 2003). Because their well is dry, helpers who are both physically and emotionally depleted have little to give to others.

There are at least two types of burnout. Skovholt (2001) identifies “meaning burnout” and “caring burnout.” If you are experiencing “meaning burnout,” your work no longer gives you adequate meaning and purpose in life. If you are experiencing “caring burnout,” your professional attachments are draining your energy. In Extension, perhaps the most common type of burnout is caring burnout. Extension professionals may place so much emphasis on giving to others that there is often not enough focus on giving to themselves. Those who experience this syndrome typically find that they are emotionally drained, exhausted, and without energy or enthusiasm. Other symptoms include a cynical attitude toward work and a loss of idealism, trust, concern, and spirit.

Burnout can also occur as a result of trying to work with ethnically diverse audiences. Typically, this type of burnout stems from an inability to gain access or participation from the targeted group. However, there can be other factors involved, such as resistance from the target group, value conflicts, etc.

Stress can also lead to burnout. In today’s fast-paced work environment, stress is a part of daily life. There are so many pressures on us to succeed that it is almost impossible not to be affected by stress. Stress can be a good thing. It can motivate us. It can help us feel energized and do our best work. However, for some, unrelieved work stress can get out of control, leading to a debilitating condition called burnout. Burnout is characterized by a lack of energy, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, negativity, reduced resistance to illnesses, increased work absenteeism, poor job performance and isolation. However, there are ways to prevent burnout and cope with difficult jobs.

Regardless of the type of burnout, it does not just happen in an instant. Corey & Corey (2003) describe burnout as “an ongoing process with developmental stages.” It may be helpful to think of burnout as a continuum, rather than in either/or terms (Corey & Corey, 2003). Therefore, strategies will be provided for coping with burnout at each stage.

Facilitating the Lesson

1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and the session. Describe how the lesson will be carried out (interactively), and share the objectives. Then, ask participants to introduce themselves by stating their names and some other information of interest (e.g., their organization, the type of program they work with, etc.). If you have taught this group before, you can alter the introduction to be more appropriate.
2. After the welcome and/or introductions, begin the lesson with the interest approach. Instructions are provided. Please read the content and instructions prior to the training so that you will be familiar with how to carry out the activity.
3. There is information on each topic below, as well as questions that you can pose to the participants as you move through the lesson. These questions will serve to stimulate discussion and even more interaction. “Address the Class” sections focus your attention on important points that should be made. “Facilitator Notes” throughout the curriculum provide important instructions or additional strategies for enhancing the lesson. There are also attachments/handouts included that you will need to distribute per the instructions. Use the PowerPoint transparencies to guide you through the each topic within the lesson.
4. Once you have covered all of the topics for this lesson, carry out the application exercise. Instructions are included. Again, please read the content and instructions prior to the training so that you will be familiar with how to carry out the activity.
5. If time permits, you can close the lesson with a summary of the major points.
6. Thank participants for their time and for sharing and working together. If you are Continuing on with another unit on a different day, you should reiterate the important details of the next training and encourage them to participate.

Lesson 1

Interest Approach

Burnout Quiz

Facilitator Note: After welcoming the class, distribute Attachment 6.1 (Burnout Quiz). Then lead into the exercise with the following discussion.

The effects of stress are cumulative. We all live within stress levels that keep us active and energized. However, when we tip the scales too often, we lose our balance and ability to keep up and bounce back. When this happens, we start to experience burnout.

Ask the class: Do you think you may be burning out? Read each of the following questions and choose the response that represents what you most often feel. After answering all the questions, calculate the results and see what your burnout potential is.

Facilitator Note: A variation of this is to break a large group into smaller groups and let smaller groups discuss the questions.

Facilitator Note: After all participants calculate their scores, the facilitator can lead a group discussion using the following questions.

Reflection Questions

- Were you surprised at your results?
- Did your score/results give you new insight into your burnout levels?
- Would you like to receive further information on burnout?

Topic 1 - What is burnout and how will I know if I am suffering from it?

Address the class: Burnout occurs when people who have previously been highly committed to a job lose interest and motivation. Typically it will occur in hard-working, high-achieving, driven people who become emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted. Some causes of burnout can include:

- ▶ Working with a difficult population, such as highly resistant clients, involuntary clients, or those who show very little progress or change.
- ▶ Having unrealistic demands on your time and energy.
- ▶ Finding it difficult to say “No” to additional commitments or responsibilities.
- ▶ Being under intense and sustained pressure for some time.
- ▶ Not delegating authority or tasks to others.
- ▶ Trying to achieve too much with the resources available.
- ▶ Giving continuous emotional support to others without requesting a sufficient amount of support for oneself.
- ▶ Giving a great deal personally and not getting much back in the way of appreciation or other positive responses.
- ▶ Lack of a sense of accomplishment and/or meaning in your work.

Sapienza and Bugental (2000) believe one of the main causes of burnout is the pressure of assuming the responsibility of curing the client. In Extension, this may manifest as a desire to save or rescue the client from his/her circumstances. Corey & Corey (2003) contend that a major source of burnout is the helper’s need to be needed. Indeed, it feels psychologically affirming to be sought after and needed. However, soon such helpers forget that they, too, have needs, which are probably not being met because of their over-involvement with others and their over-commitment. There is a considerable expenditure of energy in thinking about and taking care of those who need you. If this need is great, you may find yourself a prisoner of the demands you have created for yourself. There are limits to how much you can take on without paying a price in terms of your physical, mental, and emotional health.

Symptoms of Burnout

Address the class: Burnout will normally occur slowly, over a long period of time. It may express itself physically or mentally.

Ask the class: Can you come up with a few symptoms of burnout? List the responses of the participants on the board.

Share any of the following symptoms that were not listed by the participants.

Physical and Emotional Burnout:

- Feelings of intense fatigue
- Vulnerability to viral infection
- Immune breakdown
- Mental exhaustion
- Feeling of lack of control over commitments
- An incorrect belief that you are accomplishing less
- A growing tendency to think negatively
- Loss of a sense of purpose and energy
- Increasing detachment from relationships, causing further conflict and stress, thus adding to burnout
- Reduced motivation, quantity and quality of job performance
- Dissatisfaction with or departure from the job

Topic 2: How do I avoid burnout?

Address the class: Discuss three strategies for avoiding burnout.

1) Diversify Work Tasks

If you are working with a high-needs population, you should take great care not to burn out. You can avoid physical burnout by keeping work tasks diversified when things get intense. Difficult contacts with clients should be mixed with lighter tasks such as scheduling or other paperwork. You can accomplish other job tasks while maintaining a balance. A relatively staggered workday can be adopted so that your mind is not put under excessive stress. You should respect feelings of intense physical and mental fatigue and switch work activities when possible.

2) Learn to Say “No”

Similarly, you can avoid mental burnout by ensuring that the job remains fun. There is a limit to your mental energy, and you should respect that. As you establish a rapport with clients, they may expect and want more and more of your time, and will rely on you more and more. It is easy for commitments to grow bigger and bigger. Remember that there are professional ways to say "No" to commitments that are outside of your duties. Otherwise you will be in severe danger of burning out as you become unhappy with your situation.

3) Refer Clients to Other Resources

Helping others can be gratifying, but boundaries can be pushed until they break. If your professional boundaries as a provider are kept clear, you and the client both benefit, since the client can then be directed more immediately to useful resources. In Extension, sometimes we try to be all things to all people, but remember: we are educators. Our role is to educate the target audience on specific subject matter. We are not, nor can we be, social workers, drug abuse counselors, or other human service providers. Extension often attracts individuals who genuinely care for others and try to do everything they can to help others. We must maintain that missionary zeal, but change the way we offer assistance. We can refer the individuals to services to provide for their needs that extend beyond our role and mission. Or, in order to still be relevant in the lives of those we serve, we can partner with other human service organizations by

bringing them in to conduct part of our program (addressing needs and issues that are outside of Extension's mission). A list of such organizations is provided.

4). Develop a personal wellness plan

This plan should include how the participants will incorporate healthy behaviors and strategies in their lives. This plan should include several dimensions of wellness (diet, exercise, social support etc.).

Exercise (if time permits):

Distribute Attachment 6.2. Divide participants into groups of four. If possible, have groups consist of those who work in the same community, county, or state. If that is not possible, then have those who work in similar programs create a group. Tell the participants to add organizations from their local communities to the list in the blank space provided. Then, have them discuss and create strategies for partnering with an organization from the list that they have not worked with. Each group will report back to the entire group.

Ask the class: Have you ever thought about ways to avoid burnout? If not, can you think about some now?

Exercise (if time permits):

Ask participants to brainstorm other ways to avoid burnout. Write down ideas. *Distribute Attachment 6.3.*

When Burnout Occurs

Address the class: If you feel that you are in danger of burning out, or are not enjoying your job, the following reminders can help you regain a sense of satisfaction with your work:

- Re-evaluate the goals of your position and the priorities there.
- Evaluate the demands placed on you and see how they fit in with the goals of your position.

- Identify your ability to comfortably meet these demands.
- If you are over-involved, reduce the commitments that are excessive.
- If people demand too much emotional energy from you, direct them to the appropriate resources, using other agencies or co-workers in a supportive role. You owe it to yourself to avoid being bled dry emotionally.
- Practice stress management skills – deep breathing, pacing your conversations, meditation, and exercise (walk on your break time, stretch).
- Examine other areas in your life that are generating stress, such as family issues, and try to solve problems and reduce stress there.
- Get the support of your friends and family in reducing stress.
- Ensure that you are living a healthy lifestyle.
- Get adequate sleep and rest to maintain your energy levels.
- Ensure that you are eating a healthy, balanced diet—a bad diet can make you feel sick or tired.
- Get adequate regular aerobic exercise.
- Limit your caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Try to take up alternative activities, such as a relaxing hobby, to take your mind off your work.
- Acknowledge your own humanity: remember that you have a right to pleasure and a right to relaxation.

Topic 3: Strategies to Cope with Burnout

Address the class: Now we will discuss a few strategies to cope with burnout.

Early Stages of Burnout

Address the class: If you are so overwhelmed in your job that you do not want to continue it, then perhaps a leave of absence may be an appropriate remedy. When you come back, you may find that you enjoy your work again, and that you were in fact saturated. Time away may give you perspective on your job and help you to avoid future burnout.

If you have already burned out once, you now know the signs to look for and the things to watch. You will be able to pace yourself and control your energy much more effectively, ensuring that you operate at stress levels where you can give your optimum performance. Igodan & Newcomb (1986) suggest the following strategies:

- Develop a realistic picture of yourself—know what you're feeling and why.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Recognize the symptoms of stress and burnout.
- Ask for help when it's needed.
- Develop a structural and personal support system.
- Retain hope.
- Develop a detached concern for recipients of your efforts.
- Maintain an active personal social life outside of work.
- Take time-outs when you need them.
- Maintain a regimen of proper nutrition and physical exercise.
- Develop a sense of organizational involvement.
- Be willing to accept counseling when it is needed.
- Develop self-therapies such as meditation, biofeedback, or relaxation response.
- Accentuate the positive.

Late Stages of Burnout

Address the class: If you are in late stages of burnout, feeling deeply overwhelmed, disenchanted with your job or depressed, you should consider getting help from a good counselor or psychologist. The cost or a portion of the cost may be covered by your medical insurance. For further information, contact your medical insurance provider or university human resource department.

Application

Exercise – Burnout Win-Lose-or-Draw

This exercise is a fun way for participants to learn about some of the physical and mental symptoms of burnout, and offers a good example of a way to have fun with your work tasks.

1. A representative from each team will come up and receive a sheet of paper from the facilitator with one of the following burnout symptoms written on it:

Physical: feelings of intense fatigue, vulnerability to viral infection, immune breakdown.

Mental: feeling of a lack of control over commitments, incorrect belief that you are accomplishing less, growing tendency to think negatively, loss of a sense of purpose and energy.

(Facilitator Note: The facilitator can create as many symptoms as time permits.)

2. The participant will have to draw or act out a description of the symptom for their team members to guess, using markers and the flipchart. Those guessing will only have their notes, or their memory of the symptoms.

3. The drawer may not use words or talk, much as in the game Charades. Only one or two minutes should be allowed for the group to guess (depending on time remaining and the size of the group). If this time runs out, a member of the other team is allowed to give it a try.

(Facilitator Note: You can use a stopwatch to add to the intensity and the fun!)

4. When someone guesses the symptom, the team they represent gets a point.

Facilitator Note: Write the symptom at the top of each correctly guessed drawing on the flip chart.

Reflection

Facilitator Note: If time permits, use the following questions as a guide for group discussion. The facilitator can share that burnout can be hard to recognize. A person may not know that they are suffering from burnout.

- How did you visually represent burnout? Why did you choose to act or draw that representation?
- How easy or difficult were some symptoms to guess/recognize?
- Why were some symptoms harder to guess/recognize than others?

Unit 6: Working with Diverse Audiences Over Time

Facilitator's Guide to Lesson 2

Lesson Title: Key Issues of Working with Ethnically Diverse and Multi-need Audiences

Goal: To reduce stress by identifying and breaking down the barriers when working with diverse audiences over time.

Objectives: At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to discuss:

- common barriers to providing service
- strategies for breaking down barriers

Materials Needed

Flip Chart

Markers

Attachments 6.4 through 6.7

Time Needed: Approximately 1 ½ hours

Background

Working with a culturally and ethnically diverse clientele can be a challenge, since different groups of individuals or even each individual may have different ways of absorbing information or interacting socially. Different Extension professionals may also have different perspectives that affect the way they deliver the information. Added to these factors is the reality that major institutions (government, schools, social welfare, banking, business) have been heavily influenced by western European traditions and mores (Gollnick & Chinn, 2001). Thus, many members of disenfranchised and ethnically diverse groups distrust government-affiliated systems because of their past and sometimes present experiences with systemic racism or discrimination.

The result is a potential wall of intricate barriers to providing education and services to a culturally and racially diverse audience. Don't be dismayed; with the proper professional preparation, such as knowledge of available resources and strategies to gaining client trust, you can succeed at accomplishing the goals of your position.

Facilitating the Lesson

1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and the session. Describe how the lesson will be carried out (interactively), and share the objectives. Then, ask participants to introduce themselves by stating their names and some other information of interest (e.g., their organization, the type of program they work with, etc.). If you have taught this group before, you can alter the introduction to be more appropriate.
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5. If time permits, you can close the lesson with a summary of the major points.
6. Thank participants for their time and for sharing and working together. If you are continuing on with another unit on a different day, you should reiterate the important details of the next training and encourage them to participate.

Lesson 2

Interest Approach

Ask the Class: Ask the participants to tell a story of their own experience or another individual's experience of being displaced. (Examples: being placed in a math class or a language class that was above your skill level, or being in a different country and trying to catch a train, order food, use a bank, find the post office, or take care of any basic needs.) Then ask the participants to share by asking the following questions:

- Have you ever gone to a foreign country or simply walked into a bank, a classroom, or a restaurant and had trouble understanding what was happening, or trouble understanding how you could get what you came for, even momentarily?
- What response did you have?
- What did you do to try to get a handle on things?

You were experiencing one or more barriers to getting what you needed. Maybe it was hard for someone from your country to understand the services available. Maybe you didn't have enough information. There are many reasons why you could have been having difficulty.

Facilitator Note: If no one mentioned that their response was to withdraw, or to pretend that they understood what was happening, share this possibility and ask others if they had a similar experience.

Topic 1: Identifying Barriers

Address the class: Individuals from various walks of life enter the environment of Extension with the goal of receiving education, direction, or assistance of some sort. If they do not understand the way the information is provided, they may “clam up” to save face, or lose trust that they will be treated respectfully. They may then take the negative experience back to others in their ethnic group, and discourage their participation.

Distribute Attachment 6.4: Common Barriers to Working with Multi-need Audiences.

Review these barriers and ask participants to share past professional experiences of these barriers with their clientele. Encourage them to add to the list.

Distribute Attachment 6.5 (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs). The facilitator can elaborate on the different levels and give specific examples for each level.

Address the class: It is often difficult to understand critical issues relevant to programming for at-risk audiences. The primary consideration is making sure that the audience is not hindered from learning or engaging in an Extension program due to preoccupation with other more immediate needs that are not being addressed. Prior to working with at-risk audiences, their immediate needs should be considered. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is an excellent example of considerations for Extension and CYFAR Programmers.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs identifies five levels of needs that all humans have. The higher levels of needs cannot be fulfilled unless the basic or lower needs are met. For example, you cannot expect at-risk audiences to attend a nutrition education program if they have to worry about childcare and transportation issues. All of these barriers can affect the trust levels of the clientele.

People prioritize relationships in their lives. Those organizations that can truly meet their felt needs have priority. As discussed in an earlier lesson, the key is to maintain relevance while remaining true to our capabilities. We must remain educators first and foremost, not human service workers (social workers, counselors, emergency aid providers, etc.). But, we must work with people at the level they have reached in the hierarchy. As discussed in Lesson One, partnering with organizations who have the resources and the mission to meet the needs that we cannot meet will be critical.

There are many ways to make people more comfortable in situations where there are barriers to understanding or the receiving of information. (Facilitator, reflect on interest approach discussion). Here are some ways that you can break down the six barriers listed in the handout.

Distribute Attachment 6.6: Breaking Down the Barriers. Point out that some suggestions are given, but that the participants will have suggestions based on their specific experience with clients. Encourage them to share these.

With all that's been said, it's easy to feel some discouragement about helping others. Here are some practical strategies for staying motivated, as well as some practical steps that each one of us can easily implement, starting today:

Distribute Attachment 6.7: Practical Steps to Staying Motivated.

At times you will be frustrated. You may try to provide resources, but become aware that clients are not taking advantage of them due to the barriers that exist. Do not despair. Keep yourself motivated by trying the following practical strategies; they can help put you back on track.

Facilitator Note: Discuss ways to enhance these strategies. Ask participants to share strategies that they have created through experience.

You can implement changes in programming to accommodate multi-need audiences by recognizing certain considerations. Ask yourself these very practical questions before working with your clients. They will help you to make changes in the way you deliver your services. This will also help you to know if you are in some way reinforcing barriers to services.

- Am I treating this person with the same respect I would give to the individuals I respect most in this world?
- Have I taken the time to ask the clients what they would like to know and learn, and how they would like to learn it?
- Have I reviewed the information in Unit 2 and Unit 3 of this curriculum about how to be more culturally competent in the design and marketing of my programs? Have I adjusted my materials accordingly? Have I spent time learning from individual members of the diverse group?

- Have I moved beyond thinking of ethnically diverse and multi-need individuals as “special program interests” and embraced them as an ongoing and integrated part of my programs?

Reflection

Address the class: Changing your perspective on working with multicultural, ethnically diverse or multi-needs audiences will ultimately strengthen you personally and professionally. Diverse groups of people have contributed hugely to the fabric of American society. These groups of people are bringing new demands for equity and acknowledgement of their unique heritage, and becoming an overall voice for change in institutional values (Beard, 1995). Reconfiguring the delivery of your services to respond to differences in values, norms, and practices will advance you and the organization you work for to a place of ultimate service. Ask participants if they have anything to add.

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WORKING WITH DIVERSE AUDIENCES OVER TIME

Attachments

Attachment 6.1: Burnout Quiz

Attachment 6.2: Community Resources for Multi-need Audiences

Attachment 6.3: Fourteen Strategies For Avoiding Burnout

**Attachment 6.4: Common Barriers When Working with Multi-
need Audiences**

Attachment 6.5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Attachment 6.6: Breaking Down Barriers

Attachment 6.7: Practical Steps to Stay Motivated

Burnout Quiz

Please review the symptoms of burnout below and circle the number that most closely corresponds to your feelings over the last six months. One (1) is low (I have not experienced this). Four (4) is high (I feel this way a lot of the time lately).

- 1 2 3 4 Complaining of fatigue, or of being overworked, or being exhausted
- 1 2 3 4 Loss of enthusiasm
- 1 2 3 4 Loss of energy
- 1 2 3 4 Fighting changes
- 1 2 3 4 Being inflexible
- 1 2 3 4 Becoming defensive easily
- 1 2 3 4 Allowing key relationships to deteriorate
- 1 2 3 4 Becoming disorganized
- 1 2 3 4 Becoming accident prone
- 1 2 3 4 Poor recall and/or memory
- 1 2 3 4 Avoiding responsibility
- 1 2 3 4 Withdrawing from people and everyday activities

Add up the total of the numbers you circled.

Results:

If you scored 1 to 14, your burnout risk is MODERATE.

If you scored 15 to 28, your burnout risk is HIGH.

If you scored 29 to 48, your burnout risk is EXTREME.

Community Resources for Multi-Need Audiences

Human Services Agencies _____

Health Departments _____

Faith-based Organizations _____

Community Action Programs _____

Consumer Credit Counseling _____

Community Colleges _____

Local Public Universities _____

Local Drug Rehabilitation Programs _____

Alcoholics Anonymous _____

Women's Centers _____

Homeless Shelters _____

Community Emergency Assistance Programs _____

Women's Auxiliary Groups _____

Youth Intervention Programs _____

Local Rescue Missions _____

Economic Development Organizations _____

Employment Security Commission _____

Food Banks and Pantries _____

Other _____

Note: The techniques for identifying specific resources in your community is provided in Unit 4 on identifying assets.

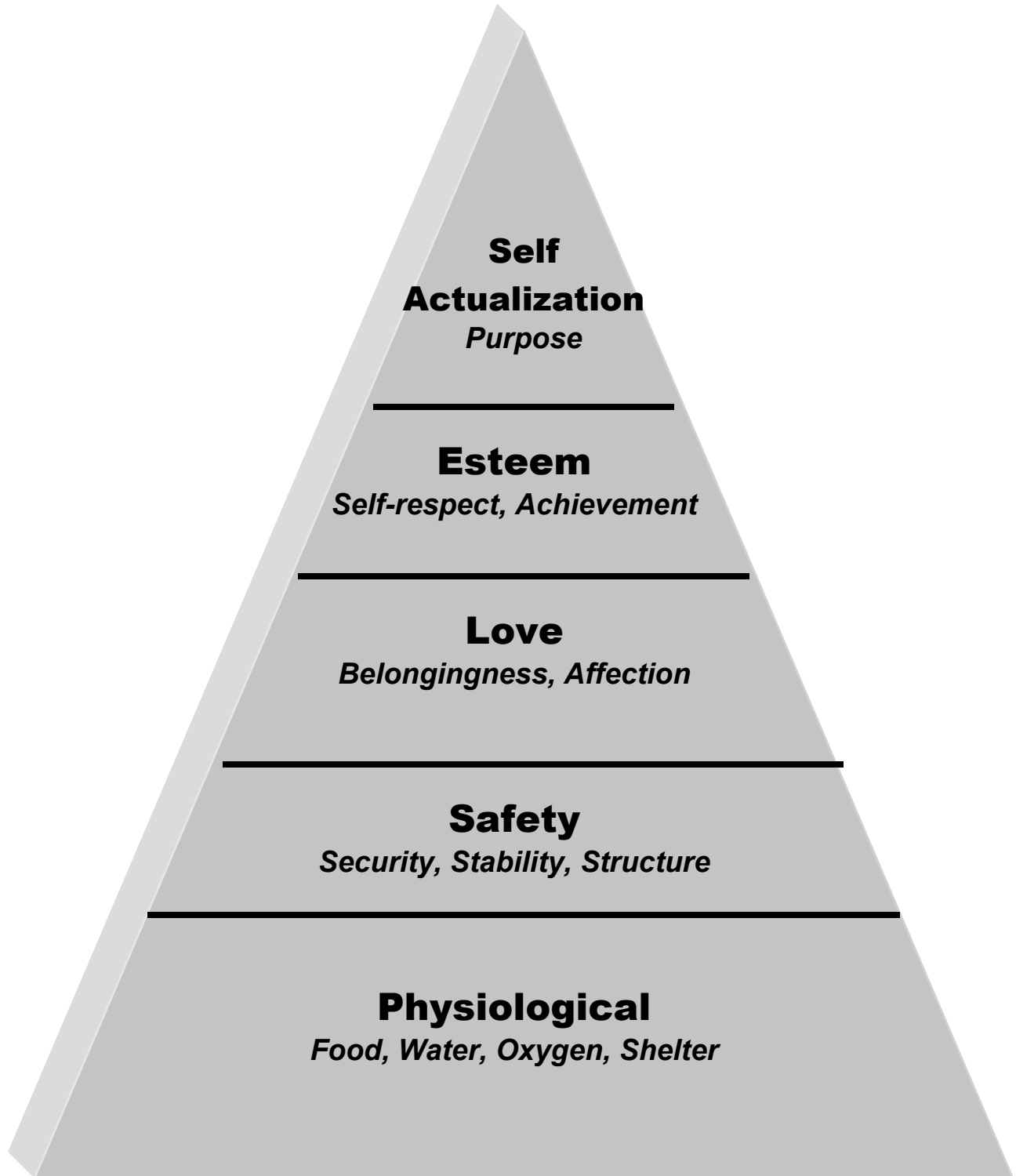
Eleven Strategies for Avoiding Burnout

1. Develop a realistic picture of yourself; know what you're feeling and why. Allow yourself time to explore your thoughts and feelings. Keep a work journal or a note section of your planner to jot down your feelings throughout your workday.
2. Set realistic goals for yourself. If your goals and the tasks to get you there do not have built-in space and time for rejuvenating, then scale down the goals.
3. Recognize the symptoms of stress and burnout. Review the symptoms and be honest with yourself about symptoms you have recognized in yourself.
4. Ask for help when it's needed. Turn to a supervisor, co-worker, counselor, etc.
5. Develop a structural and personal support system. (Consult websites or printed office newsletters about anti-burnout tips. Utilize the resources provided by your employer, such as personal time.
6. Retain hope. Remain hopeful that you can help others while maintaining a sense of balance for yourself.
7. Develop a detached concern for recipients of your efforts. Help yourself and your clients by keeping them on-task with the resources you are providing. Direct and guide them without becoming personally involved in their lives. After all they are seeking your guidance, not a personal relationship, and the best way for you to assist is to maintain this professional distance.
8. Maintain an active personal social life outside of work. To avoid the temptation of personalizing client relationships, make sure that you spend time at least once per week with friends.
9. Take time-outs when you need them. Leave your client work to have lunch or take a break. Take advantage of vacation time and other benefits to rejuvenate yourself.
10. Maintain a regimen of proper nutrition and exercise. This is primary. Your own health is paramount to having the ability to work in a position helping others.
11. Accentuate the positive. Each day, remind yourself of the things you did accomplish, as opposed to berating yourself over the things you did not accomplish.

Common Barriers When Working with Multi-need Audiences

- Language issues
- Problems with accessibility (lack of wheelchair ramps or Braille materials, etc.)
- Compounding problems (substance abuse, mental illness, etc.)
- Inappropriate presentation of materials (e.g., pamphlets written at an elevated or advanced reading level)
- Financial barriers (service providers incorrectly assume transportation, child care, fees, etc. are not an issue)
- Distraction because basic needs are not fulfilled (food, water, shelter)
- Other: _____

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Breaking Down Barriers

LANGUAGE

—Use interpreters. On your volunteer applications, create a space for individuals to add any experience that they may have interpreting other languages into English.

—Use language dictionaries. Keep language dictionaries in your office for basic translations. (You might find these at library or used bookstores.)

ACCESSIBILITY

—Install wheelchair ramps (seek funding, utilize volunteer capabilities, use architectural student volunteers to design, etc.).

CLIENTELE GROUPS NOT REPRESENTED BY STAFF

—When hiring staff, encourage individuals from these groups to apply (advertise in alternative papers and newsletters).

PRESENTATION OF MATERIALS

—Assemble an ad hoc committee (utilize university communications students) to review the pamphlets and leaflets in your office for their relevance to your clientele.

SERVICES

—Review the Community Resources in Unit 6 for other services that will help your clients attend programs.

— Review your local transportation provider's information on bus routes, etc. and keep copies of these materials in your office, along with any subsidy information.

DISTRACTION BECAUSE BASIC NEEDS ARE NOT FULFILLED

—Using the Community Resources from attachment 6:2, identify sources for food, water, and shelter (food pantries, shelters for homeless and battered women, etc.). Keep up-to-date information from these agencies in your office.

Practical Steps to Stay Motivated

- Write down the initial objectives for working with the client(s). (For example: getting a client to attend a parenting workshop.)
- Anticipate potential barriers (language, age, trust, transportation, etc.) and develop strategies and means for providing resources in the presence of these barriers.
- Make a list of these resources before speaking with or meeting with the client(s).
- Where possible, present clients with a diverse and familiar contact point, such as individuals who speak the same language or are of the same ethnic background. This may help offer a source of comfort and trust.
- Save any contact information about ways to work around barriers (translators, transportation services, food banks, literacy programs, community advocates, etc.). These are invaluable sources that can be utilized again, or may lead to additional contacts.
- Volunteer to serve on ad hoc committees for community initiatives involving the groups you are serving. You will learn a lot that will enhance the way you deliver your service, and you will be fulfilling your need to give beyond the barriers of your position.