

Our Annual Meeting is coming up November 16, 2018. Last year at the same meeting, it was encouraging to hear guest speakers identify the importance of addressing practitioner well-being as part of comprehensive workforce development initiatives.

Rick Hanson's research and publications (including *Just One Thing: Developing a Buddha Brain One Step at a Time*, 2011) suggest we pay attention to the little things that make a positive difference in our daily routines, work, and relationships. He calls this self-directed positive neuroplasticity-- a fancy way of saying what Louis Hay, Herbert Benson and others said more than 20 years ago-- the power of positive thought. Perhaps a timeless concept and certainly consistent with many spiritual practices. I think Hanson is referring to Buddha's Brain as a metaphor for "keep it simple" and "one step at a time"- familiar recovery concepts.

Last year, I had the pleasure of hosting NHADACA's vendor table at the Bi-State Workforce Development Conference in Concord. The Keynote speaker was Yale graduate Dr. Corey Martin, MD founder of the Bounce Back Project; a community and workplace resilience building program. He shared from his personal journey of how he, his colleagues, and their community are coping with grief associated with sudden unexpected death of two close colleagues, one due to suicide linked to work related stressors. Concerned Human Resource Administrators spoke to challenges with recruitment and retention. Everyone seemed validated and relieved to hear Dr. Martin speak to the ethical dilemmas of practitioner burn-out and compromised patient care, yet - his message is hopeful. Together, we spoke at length about how to address the challenge of practitioner well-being during workforce crisis.

I walked away from this conversation inspired and developed a Provider Needs Survey to learn more about these issues in my local community. In January, an 11 item survey based on the criteria for Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL version 5) (Stamm, 2009) was distributed to approximately 200 professionals in our North Country Region. While external surveys have a 10-15% response rate, we are pleased to see a 17% response rate.

Survey respondent highlights:

- 96% respondents meet at risk criteria for Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL version 5) (Stamm, 2009)
- 70.59% " are concerned patient safety is sometimes compromised due to workforce shortage
- 61.76% " *want training on* "Coping with moral dilemmas in today's workforce landscape"
- 56.25% " *want training on* "Self-monitoring and how it is an ethical response to stress"
- 46.88% " *want training on* "Leniency bias and compassionate truth telling"
- 45.45% " are currently or have some Supervisory responsibilities
- 41.18% respondents not credentialed as SUD treatment providers, ie;
Police Officer, Corrections, Nurse Practitioner, MD family physician, School Counselor

3 open-ended questions yielded the following themes for training and continuing education:

- 1) The need for more cross-training on SUD topics and chronic care
- 2) Supervision skill development to boost self-care as a risk management resource

Although the reality of this data is sobering, feedback reflects "relief" for validating a shared experience without attaching shame or blame. This is hopeful. National validation is also involved. For the first time in the history of Surgeon General Reports, this 2016 publication identified addiction as America's foremost public health crisis. Perhaps the word transcisis- meaning a long-term pattern of recurring crisis -- more accurately describes what we are experiencing. In recognizing all of this, it is important we tend to one another as first responders, front-line staff, counselors, supervisors, teachers, coaches, public safety, primary care providers, members of faith communities, and everyone impacted by this public health crisis. The little things can make a positive difference. This act of self-care and compassion for

one another is at the heart of NHADACA's Mission as well as being an ethical imperative, and now, thanks to Rick Hanson, a step toward developing a Buddha Brain!

In your service,
Angela Thomas Jones, LCMHC, MLADC, LCS, RYT, CCFP
Ethics Committee Chairperson
North Country Regional Representative

Book description for Just One Thing: Developing a Buddha Brain One Step at a Time (2011)

You've heard the expression, "It's the little things that count." It's more than a simple platitude. Research has shown that integrating little daily practices into your life can change the way your brain works. Just One Thing is a groundbreaking combination of mindfulness meditation and neuroscience that can help you deepen your sense of well-being and unconditional happiness. This guide offers simple things you can do routinely, mainly inside your mind, that will support and increase your sense of security and worth, resilience, effectiveness, well-being, insight, and inner peace. For example, they include: taking in the good, protecting your brain, feeling safer, relaxing anxiety about imperfection, not knowing, enjoying your hands, taking refuge, and filling the hole in your heart. At first glance, you may be tempted to underestimate the power of these seemingly simple practices. But they will gradually change your brain through what's called experience-dependent neuroplasticity. Moment to moment, whatever you're aware of—sounds, sensations, thoughts, or your most heartfelt longings—is based on underlying neural activities. This book offers simple brain training practices you can do every day to protect against stress, lift your mood, and find greater emotional resilience. Just one practice each day can help you to:

- Be good to yourself
- Enjoy life as it is
- Build on your strengths
- Be more effective at home and work
- Make peace with your emotions.

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