



OH WHAT FUN!

Building Resilience in Hospice Staff During the Holidays

Podcast Presented By:



Shelly Mikuls, LMSW, President, HospiceChoice Rx

With a master's degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis, MO, Shelly Mikuls serves as President for HospiceChoice Rx. Shelly has worked in and around the hospice industry since 2004, beginning her career as a hospice social worker. Over the years, while focusing on mentoring and process improvement, she transitioned into various leadership roles including guiding a start-up hospice through certification and accreditation as Executive Director.



Kurt A. Kazanowski, MS, RN, CHE, Managing Partner for Hospice Advisors

Kurt is a native Detroit and now lives and works in West Palm Beach, Florida. He is the Managing Partner for Hospice Advisors, a consulting and training company for hospice and home care. Additionally, Kurt is the owner of Caregiving Experts, a personal care-private duty company located in Plymouth, MI outside Detroit. Kurt was also part owner of a Home Care company in Moscow Russia years ago. He is an author, speaker and health care entrepreneur. His recent books, "A Son's Journey: Taking Care of Mom and Dad" and "The Seven Pillars of Growth" provide a platform for his professional speaking. Kurt holds a BSN from Mercy College; a master's in health service administration from Wayne State University and is a member of the National Speakers Association.



Burnout can be like a dimmer switch, and many people don't even realize they have it. Other signs of burnout can be compassion fatigue, anxiety, isolation, and feelings of hopelessness. Physical symptoms can include excessive or frequent fatigue, agitation or sleeping too much or too little, along with behavioral changes like drinking or substance abuse.

During and leading up to the holidays it's important to have self-awareness of these signs. As a friend, you can help yourself or colleagues that may be experiencing burnout.

Reduce Stress and Prevent Burnout

- Develop realistic expectations for yourself
 - Determine what you can and can't do in a day
- Ask for help
 - Many people are there to help you
- Learn to say 'No'
 - It's OK to turn down a request
- Help a friend
 - When you think of a friend who may need help, check in with them. Give them a quick call or send them a note or email of encouragement
- Practice self-care
 - Exercise, even a short walk, helps to reduce stress
 - Eat healthy
 - Do what you enjoy doing, even for 20 minutes, to put your mind on something other than work issues
 - Breathe – inhale, take a deep breath and exhale
- Build a support system
 - Join a community or Church group
 - Take a lunch break, talk to people in the office
 - Participate in holiday events; ugly sweater day, decorate your office door
- Establish healthy boundaries
 - Make changes in the usual traditions if you are stressed out
 - Ask for help or say 'no' to invitations
 - Make a plan for the holidays
- Seek professional help
 - Take advantage of Employer Assistance Programs (EAP) offered through most employer insurance programs
 - Review online AARP resources

Start Now!

- Plan ahead – the holidays are right around the corner
- Set expectations for yourself and others, your family
- Ask for help and just say 'no'
- Schedule self-care
- If you or a friend is dealing with loss of a loved one, create an expression for the loss
- Support a friend

You are more resilient than you think. Finding a sense of purpose can help you reduce stress and find meaning in holiday challenges. Instead of being discouraged by problems, with defined self-care, you'll be more motivated to create a support system and establish healthy boundaries to guard your emotions. Learn from past experiences and build your resilience.

Take care of yourself so you can take care of others in your circle of friends and family.

