



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

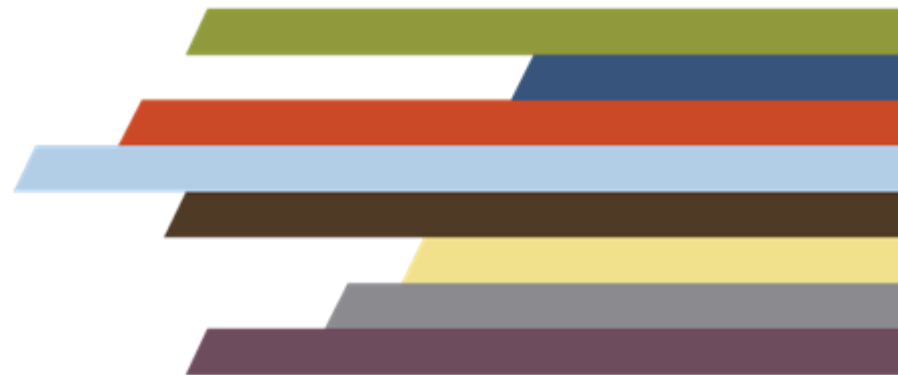
MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Supporting Youth Peer Support Specialists During COVID-19

August 3rd, 2020

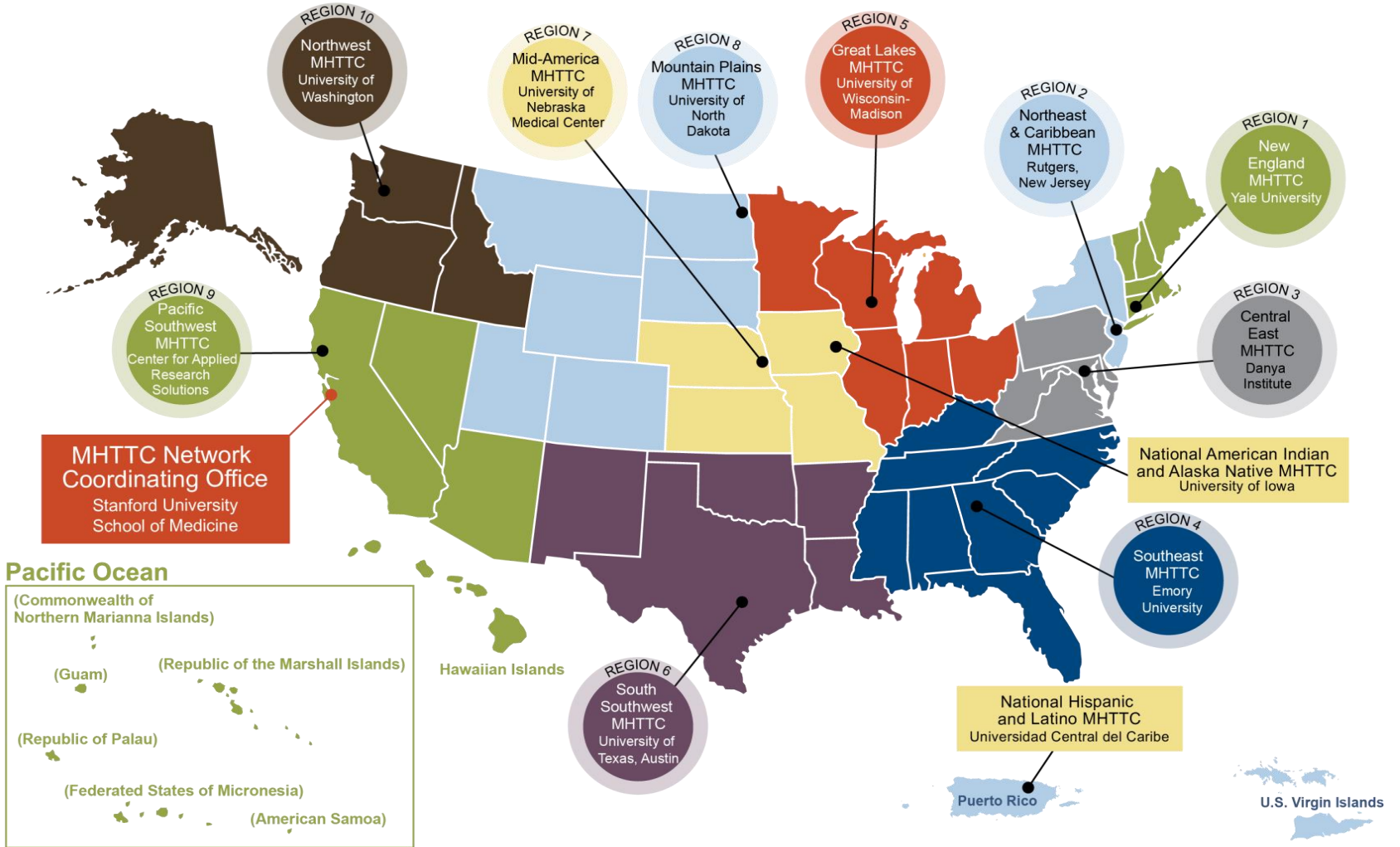




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MHTTC Network



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The use of affirming language inspires hope and advances recovery.

LANGUAGE MATTERS.

Words have power.

PEOPLE FIRST.

The MHTTC uses affirming language to promote the promises of recovery by advancing evidence-based and culturally informed practices.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Learning Objectives
- Youth and Young Adults Who Are At Risk
- Strategies for Supporting Youth
- Supporting YPSS Staff
- Additional Resources and Conclusion

Introductions



Maria Hermsen is a Research Assistant with Pathways RTC at Portland State University. She has experience providing peer support for transition age youth, supervising youth peer support specialists, and managing a youth drop-in center program.

Caitlin Baird is a Project Manager and Trainer with Pathways RTC at Portland State University. Caitlin has experience working directly with transition aged youth and young adults as a peer support specialist and as a supervisor for peer support specialists in wraparound and other mental health settings.



Learning Objectives

- Today's webinar will cover:
 - Youth and young adults who are most at risk while sheltering in place
 - Strategies YPSS can use to support youth and young adults
 - How to support YPSS staff with safety and self-care
 - Warning signs of burnout

Youth and Young Adults Who are at Risk

And How to Support Them During Covid



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Youth/Young Adults Most at Risk

- This is a hard time for all of the youth we're working with. However, shelter-in-place rules and/or restricted in-person meetings may be particularly difficult for:
 - Youth experiencing homelessness
 - Youth in abusive homes
 - LGBTQ+ youth
 - Youth in emotionally unsafe homes

Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Many youth, particularly those experiencing homelessness, may have a lack of access to reliable technology at this time. Many of the places they may have previously used for Wi-Fi, or to charge their phones, may no longer be open. Some helpful resources may be:
- Xfinity hot-spots
- Organizational funding for phones, chargers, or minutes
- Partnerships with schools that may be providing technology



LGBTQ+ Youth



- Many LGBTQ+ youth may be staying in places where their identity is not accepted.
- Support YPSS in developing a safety and self-care plan with these young people.
- Connect them to affirming resources.

Youth in Abusive & Emotionally Unsafe Homes

- Support YPSS by checking-in with them regularly about youth who are staying in homes that are not safe.
- Ensure the YPSS understand mandatory reporting policies and that they explain such to said youth.
- Help YPSS develop safety and self-care plans for the youth (we will cover this in-depth later).

Strategies for Supporting Youth

Supporting Youth in Times of Crisis

- Youth peer support specialists should be in regular contact with youth, and may increase their level of contact through text, social media, etc.
 - For many, this involves flexible and increasingly non-traditional hours
- Youth peer support specialists should check-in with youth about their self-care and crisis plans.
 - These plans should be adjusted to support activities they can do at home and people they can contact remotely.
- Ensure youth peer support specialists are aware of local crisis resources that are operational should youth need more formal help.

Maintaining Emotional Safety and Privacy

- Many young people are sheltering-in-place in homes or residencies that may not offer them a lot of privacy or feel safe for them to openly discuss their needs. Or, young people may not feel comfortable being on video with providers from their living space. Talk with your young people about the following options if such is the case:
 - Walk and talk
 - Private chat functions/email/texting
 - Code word(s) or signal
 - Zoom backgrounds
 - Preplanning advocacy needs for virtual Wrap or team meetings
 - Safety and contingency planning



Walk and Talk

- This strategy allows young people to walk in their neighborhoods, or a place where they feel safe, while speaking on the phone with their YPSS. This not only gives them privacy, but they can explore new places in their community and show them to their provider.

Private Chat Functions and Code Words

- YPSS should educate youth in how to use private chat functions while in group team meetings, or check and make sure that texts/emails and other forms of written communication are private.
- YPSS and young people should work together to generate code words. One code word can indicate that the subject should be changed, and another can be used for urgent safety matters.

Zoom Backgrounds



- If youth are not comfortable with others seeing their room or space during check-ins, they can use a Zoom background. This is particularly helpful for youth who are participating in peer groups.

Preparing for Advocacy at Team Meetings

- YPSS should meet with youth before a virtual team meeting to discuss:
 - What the youth wants to share
 - What would make the youth feel most comfortable
 - Where the youth would like to be when participating in the meeting (in the same room as their guardian or a separate room)
 - How the youth and YPSS can communicate during the meeting
 - What the youth would like the YPSS to share at the meeting

Safety Planning

Help your youth revise their safety plans to support them while sheltering-in-place. This may include questions like:

Do you have somewhere in your home where you can talk privately?

What activities can you do to distract and self-soothe?

Is there someone you can call for support?

If you must leave for your own safety, where can you go?

Safety Planning



Reporting protocols



Transportation



Shelter (with a family member, friend, or resource)



Essentials

Supporting YPSS Staff

Self-care and signs of burnout



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Supporting YPSS Staff

- Staff may require extra flexibility during this time. Check in with staff regularly about their work schedules, especially since hours may have shifted dramatically, and their self-care plans.
- Make sure staff are setting appropriate boundaries around scheduling and with increased availability to young people via text, telehealth, etc., and less scheduling constraints
- The pandemic is a traumatic event, and staff likely are experiencing their own personal traumas in different or heightened ways. Watch for trauma reactions in your staff and offer support as needed.

Supporting YPSS Staff

- Make sure staff are aware of any resources available to them during this time, including EAP, PTO, and any changes that may have occurred as a result of recent legislation
- Keep lines of communication open - consider implementing more frequent group communication via Zoom to keep a sense of continuity and connection

Supervision and Self-Care

- Check-in with staff about what they are doing for self-care.
- During this time, it can be particularly difficult for staff to “turn off” work mode.
- Ensure they are setting boundaries and maintaining as much of a “regular” schedule as possible.

Creating Self-Care Plans with YPSS

One Example of a Self-Care Plan

Level of Intervention	What supports and Energises me?	Who is involved?	What is currently in Place?	What steps do I need to take now?
Personal				
Professional				
Organisational				

Accountable to

Review date:.....



<https://www.youthadtoolbox.org.au/your-personal-self-care-plan>

Creating a Self-Care Plan with YPSS

_____ 's Self-Care Plan!

MIND

BODY

SPIRIT

SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

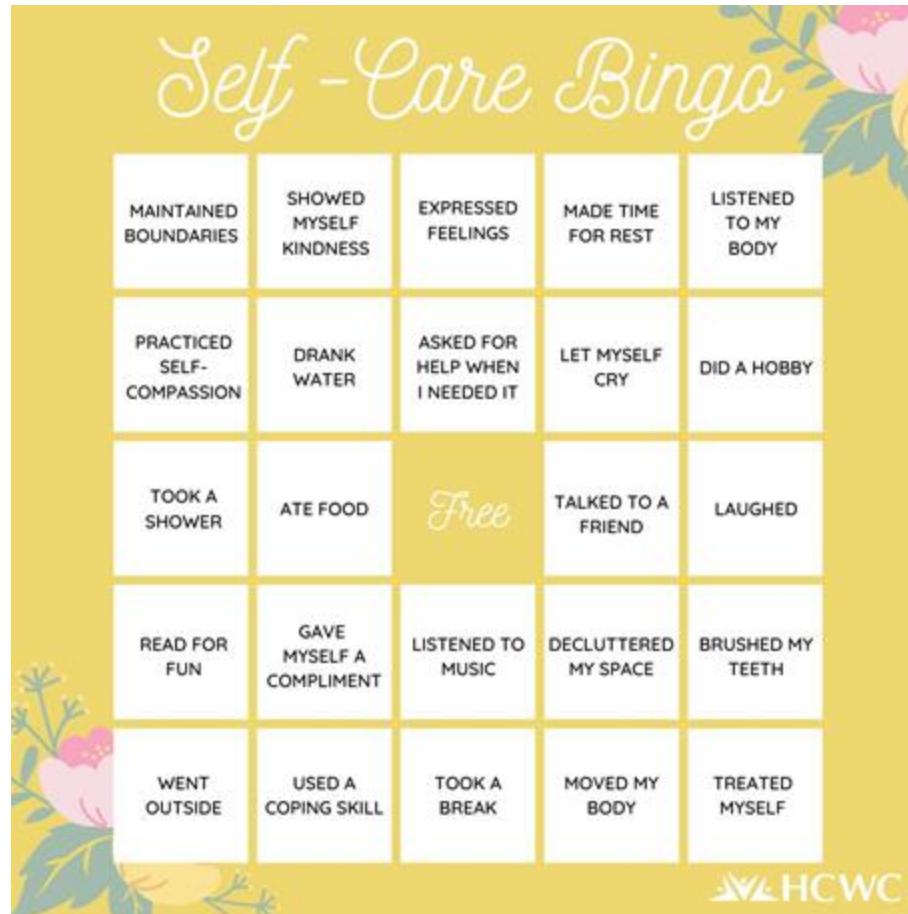
I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

 Self Care Plan by Social Work Tech | Ignacio Pacheco
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<http://socialworktech.com/2011/05/25/making-a-self-care-plan/?v=f24485ae434a>

Creating a Self-Care Plan with YPSS



Burnout

- Burnout is recognized by the World Health Organization as a condition caused by chronic, cumulative stress at work.
- Burnout can happen in any job, but it is most commonly seen in those working in helping professions.
- Common causes of burnout include:
 - Systemic stress
 - Feeling ineffective
 - Organizational chaos
 - Workload
 - Lack of work/life balance
 - Lack of organizational support
 - Unclear job expectations

Signs of Burnout

Disillusionment

Fatigue

Feelings of
helplessness

Irritability

Changes in
work habits

Anxiety

Inability to
concentrate

Addressing Burnout

- Be reflective, not punitive.
- Support your staff to identify the reason for their burnout. Reflect on what happened, and what you might do to prevent burnout from occurring in the future
- Work with your staff to come up with a plan to help them “recover” from their burnout. How can you support them to feel better and get back to where they need to be?

Creating a Plan

A plan should always be put in writing, and include what accommodations are being made, as well as a timeline for checking in

For example, if the staff is working a modified schedule, or taking on different responsibilities in order to address burnout/catch up on other tasks, it is important that you put a specific **date** that you will be checking in on how the staff is doing and any progress toward goals

We're Going to Say it Again – Self-care!



- Any plan around burnout should also include a self-care plan
- You will need to address that some activities (especially social ones) must be modified.
- As with plans around returning to a normal workload, etc., it is important that you maintain accountability around self care with your staff. This means following up on self-care activities discussed during conversations on burnout, especially, but also means following up on discussions about self-care in general.
 - For example, if you ask your staff what they are going to do for self-care over the weekend, and they say they are going on a hike, ask them on Monday how their hike was

Questions?

Resources

- Supportive Practices for Mental Health Professionals During Pandemic Related Social Distancing:
<https://mhttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/MHTTC%20Social%20Distancing%202020%20Product%20FINAL.pdf>
- Covid-19: Considerations for a Trauma Informed Response For Work Settings: <https://traumainformedoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Considerations-for-COVID-19-Trauma-Informed-Response.pdf>
- Trauma Informed Care and the Stress of Covid-19:
<https://traumaticstressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Trauma-Informed-Care-and-the-Stress-of-COVID-19.pdf>

Contact Info

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- Join the PS MHTTC Newsletter:
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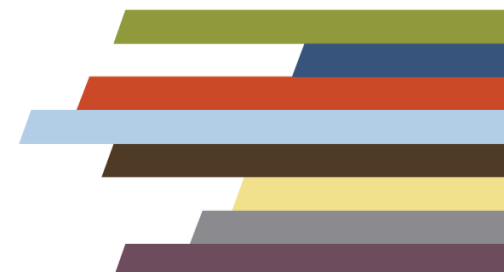
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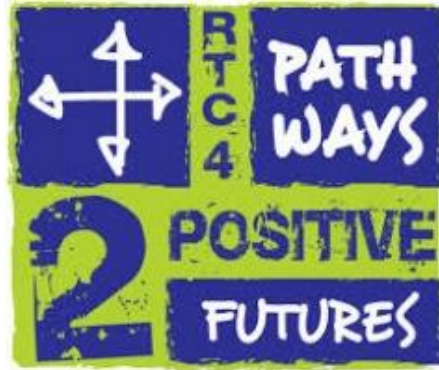
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Thank You!



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