

**Alegent Health**  
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# Inside Advice: Self Care Coaching from Your Colleagues.

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Clinical Psychologist  
Consultant

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## Inside Advice to and from Behavioral Caregivers

### Agenda

- Introduction
- Satisfactions of Behavioral Health Caregiving
- Stresses of Behavioral Health Caregiving
- Self Care Advantages of Behavioral Caregivers
- Self Care Disadvantages of Behavioral Caregivers
- Relevant Research Results
- Inside Advice from Colleagues
- Dr Erick Hill – “Dialing Down”
- Questions and Discussion

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## Self Care

### Some Joys and Stresses of Behavioral Healthcare

- Joys
  - One of the “purest” of the people professions
  - A front row seat for the show of life
  - Helping people with complex emotional pains and problems which impact their deepest inner experience
  - Feeling like you are successful at work that few have the talent and training to do.
  - Believing in the mission and purpose of your work.

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### Some Joys and Stresses of Behavioral Healthcare

- **Joys, cont**
  - Colleagues who are BWFFs (best work friends forever)
  - Coworkers and Doctors who appreciate your work and let you know
  - Supervisors who appreciate your work and let you know
  - Feeling successful at difficult challenges under tough conditions
  - Learning new things to help you feel more successful at your job

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### Some Joys and Stresses of Behavioral Healthcare

- **Joys, cont**
  - Knowing that most patients get better
  - Hearing from patients who are grateful for you and your work with them
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_




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### Some Joys and Stresses of Behavioral Healthcare

- **Stresses**
  - Pressure and pace of workplace duties.
  - Ongoing exposure to stressed out patients (and peers) aka "compassion fatigue", or "secondary trauma"
  - Fear of making errors
  - Fear of adverse outcomes
  - Ongoing annoyance with a colleague




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### Some Joys and Stresses of Behavioral Healthcare

- **Stresses, cont**
  - Ongoing annoyance with a doctor or supervisor.
  - Feeling devalued by doctors, peers or management
  - Criticism from a patient, family, peer or supervisor
  - Patient gets worse, not better
  - Patient ends their life
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_




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Self Care

### Some Self Care Advantages of Behavioral Caregivers:

1. We know about mental and emotional health.
2. We know how to recognize and help emotional distress and prompt self nurturance
3. We value adaptive coping skills and know them when we see them
4. We know that even strong people can become depleted if they fail to adequately care for themselves.
5. We know that stress is external and internal
6. We know of the Serenity Prayer
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Self Care

### Some Self Care Disadvantages of Behavioral Caregivers:

1. Others ask us for care; we don't easily ask others for care, including ourselves.
2. We comfortably give care, but we don't comfortably ask for and accept care
3. We often don't consider our needs until we are exhausted.
4. We can have an "us and them" mentality about caregivers and caregetters.
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Self Care

**Relevant Research Results:**  
**Studer Research – 7792 Healthcaregivers**

- 80% of healthcaregivers are female
- 75% said they would choose the same career again or recommend it to others
- 48% are satisfied, 23% very satisfied 
- 36% are satisfied with work life balance; 9% are very satisfied with their current work life blend.

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Self Care

**Eric Gentry, PhD:**

“If you do high intensity human services, you can’t give light and warmth to others without burning a bit of yourself.”




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Inside Advice

“Life is not the way it’s supposed to be. It’s the way it is. The way you deal with it is what *makes* the difference.”



Virginia Satir

Quoted in *B is for Balance: A Nurse’s Guide for Enjoying Life at Work and at Home.*  
 By Sharon Weinstein MS, RN

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Inside Advice

Handling the Heat - Inside Advice from your Colleagues: Audio Interviews:

- Psychiatric Nurses
- Psychiatric Technician





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Self Care

Three Categories of Coping and Self Care

- Useful Attitudes and Outlooks
- Useful Actions at Work
- Life Balancing Behaviors




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Healing Presence



“You have to find at least one thing you like about your clients. The bond is critical”

Sam Minsky PhD,  
Meth Addiction Treatment Director

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  Inside Advice

**Alan Hutchinson, RN. ("Hutch") Psychiatric Nurse - 34 yrs experience:**

- "If you find a job you love, you never have to work another day in your life"
- "I like to introduce myself to every patient on the unit"
- "I do more hobbies now, golf, bowling, coins."
- "Work-life balance is critical even when you love your work"

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  Inside Advice

**Mary Ann Boles, Psychiatric Technician since 1971.**

- "I'm always looking for new things to learn about caring for my patients and myself."
- "Every three or four months I take a short time off. Even looking forward to it gets you through rough shifts"
- "Part of loving your work is taking care of yourself."

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  Inside Advice

**Mary Ann, Cont.,**

- "I use a vanilla body spray. Vanilla aroma has been proven to have a calming effect. It helps relax me and my patients."
- " I sleep by an unlit vanilla candle."
- " I enjoy reading non clinical books"
- "When I shower, I picture stresses swirling around down into the drain"
- "You don't want to wait until the stress is screaming. I do these tools routinely."

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  Inside Advice

**Mary Ann Boles, cont:**

- “I use being present, mindful, not worrying about what’s going on in the organization or at home, focusing on the work with the patient right now.”
- “The ability to tune things out.”
- “I find a drink of tea very soothing, and I have a warm blanket as one of my soothers for myself at home.”

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  Inside Advice

**Tim Christenson, RN Psychiatric Nurse**

- “When I’m done with work, I’m done with work.”
- “Outside activities. I don’t think about work. I play golf, bowling, do stuff with my kids”
- “You trust your colleagues will take care of the work when you are not there.”
- “I try not to work overtime. I’ve sometimes had to say no to double shifts asked of me”

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  Inside Advice

**• Tim Christianson RN, cont:**

- “I’m lucky that I’m a laid back person. I take a few deep breaths, tell myself I’ll get though it. I’ll take time for a break from the patients by doing the documentation”
- “I don’t try to micromanage other people’s work”
- “Everybody gets frustrated, but the next day will come. I don’t think about it after work”
- “I still very much enjoy hearing about our patients doing well.”

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Dialing Down

**Dialing Down our Distress Reflexes – Erick Hill PhD**

- Know thy self – Shelter in the storm
  - You are not what you think
  - Beware of Negative Self Talk
  - Choose your words wisely
- Triggers and Soothers
  - Know your button pushers
  - Know your symptoms
  - Fill your toolbox with 1 min, 5 min, 10 min, 20 min + distress techniques
- Get Comfortable with Discomfort
  - Truth from Opinion
  - Work with not against self
  - Let go when necessary

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Themes

What did you notice? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn? \_\_\_\_\_

What will you use? \_\_\_\_\_

What will you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

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Inside Advice

**Self Care for Caregivers**

- Take care of yourself at work and away from work
- Leave your work at work most of the time
- Usually care for self and others
- Sometimes care for self instead of others
- Know that you have made a vital lifesaving difference

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Inside Advice

Anybody want some vanilla scent?



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Inside Advice

Questions and Suggestions



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