STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING BURNOUT

Berkeley Law Academic Skills Program Workshop
THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WHIRLPOOL

• Impostor phenomenon
• Catastrophic thinking
• Financial concerns
• National and world events
• Burnout
What is "burnout"?

- Exhaustion
- Lack of motivation
- Alienation or detachment
- Frustration, cynicism, and other negative emotions
- Difficulty focusing
- Not taking care of yourself
- Being preoccupied with school even when you are not studying or in class
- Generally decreased satisfaction
- Health problems
WHAT CAUSES BURNOUT?

• Burnout is different from stress
• A person can be burned out in one role, but not in other areas
• Too much demand but not enough support
• Sometimes changing the situation is helpful, but not always
STRATEGIES TO AVOID BURNOUT:

CHANGING YOUR MINDSET

• Remember: burnout is not a personal failing
• Give yourself permission to rest
• Growth mindset
• Mindfulness
• Building and being in community
• Boundaries
• Self-compassion and changing the way that you talk to yourself
• Success is not the result of innate or “fixed” abilities

• Fixed mindset leads to the avoidance of perceived challenges

• Growth mindset is the belief that skills are not fixed, that you can acquire/hone skills with practice

• Mindset itself is a belief that we can change
MINDFULNESS

- Permission to begin again, as often as necessary
- “Life is not personal, permanent, or perfect.”
  - Your performance in law school is not who you are
  - Things are constantly changing
  - There are things we can control; other times we breathe and let it pass
TRY THIS

1. Take a few deep breaths
2. Acknowledge how you are feeling
3. Connect with that emotion without judgment – name your feelings and welcome them
4. Extend compassion to yourself and others
BUILDING AND BEING IN COMMUNITY

- Community outside of law school
- Community within law school
- Building community in law school
“REAL” SELF-CARE VS. “FAUX” SELF-CARE

- Commodification of “self-care”
- Self-care sometimes can feel like an obligation and one more thing to make time for and feel guilty about
- Self-care in service to productivity and efficiency


See NT Times Ezra Klein Show: Guest Host Tressie McMillan Cotton interviews Dr. Pooja Lakshmin.
"REAL" SELF-CARE

Four practices:

1. Setting boundaries
2. Practicing self-compassion
3. Aligning your values; and
4. Exercising power

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RESOURCES

• Student Services
• Academic Skills Program faculty and peer tutors
• Academic Skills Program website
• Wellness at Berkeley Law website
• Berkeley Law staff psychologist
• Tang Center Psychological & Counseling Services