

# Caring for Ourselves

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Today

**Self Compassion**



**Lowering Affective  
Empathy**



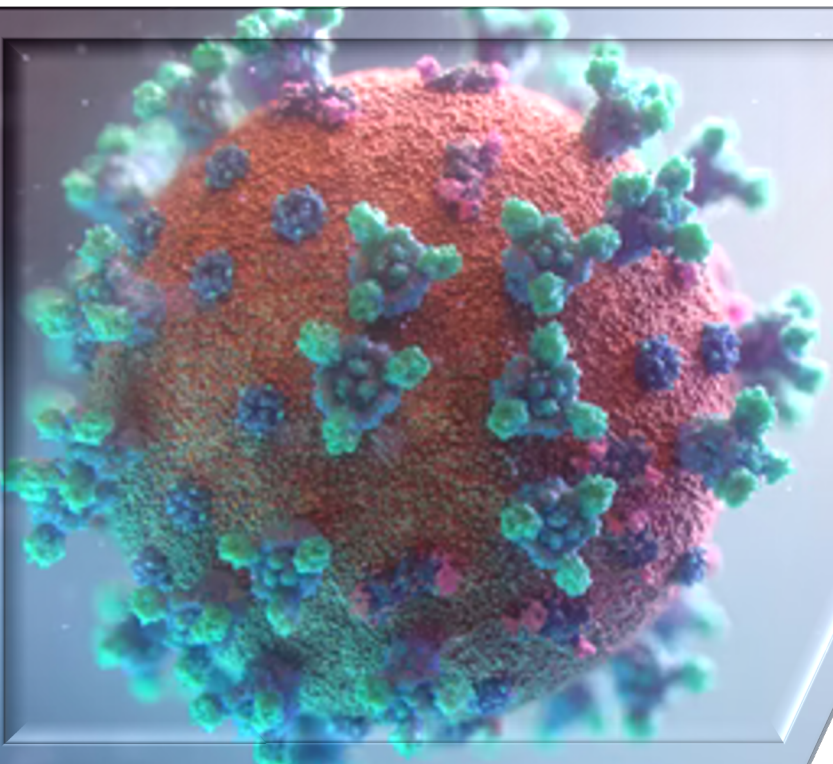
**Ditch perfectionism**



A photograph of a person's legs and feet walking on a wet beach at sunset. The person is walking from the top right towards the center. The wet sand reflects the vibrant orange and red colors of the sunset sky. The person's reflection is clearly visible in the shallow water on the sand. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

**Compassion has no standards**

-Ashwini Narayanan



# CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

**FOX**  
**59** 8:43  
NEWS 62°

RIGHT NOW

ANDERSON  
CLEAR

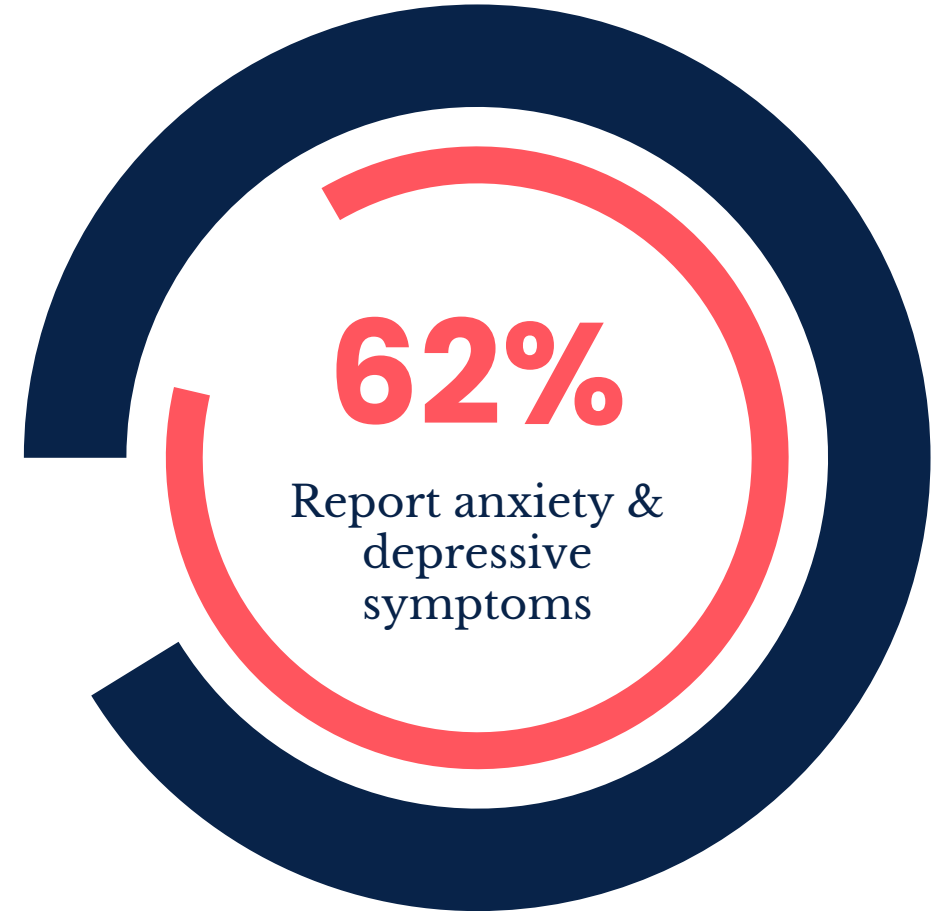
60°

BLOOMINGTON  
CLOUDY

60°

# Health care workers 2021


**12%** increase in substance use disorders



# Burnout Temperature Check

*....resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed....*

1. Feelings of **energy depletion** or **exhaustion**
2. Increased **mental distance** from one's job *or* feelings of **negativism** or **cynicism** related to one's job
3. **Reduced** professional **efficacy**



irritability

hopelessness

fatigue

sleep/eating problems

somatic (stomachaches; headaches)

uncontrollable worry

panic attacks

not wanting to do things that used to be pleasurable

thoughts of wanting to die



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# Affective Empathy



# Affective Empathy

Feeling other's feelings



Can be painful



Is related to 'burnout'



Can help us know others feelings



can also be a projection



Doesn't feel like 'caring' to others



Can make us try to 'fix'



Can make us angry at others



# INTENTIONAL EMPATHY

## MOVING FROM AFFECTIVE TO COGNITIVE EMPATHY

**Awareness of:** feeling affective empathy

**Feels like:** distress, sadness, hopelessness (what the other person is feeling)

**Desire:** to move into cognitive empathy

### Common reasons:

- to increase our helpfulness to others
- to soothe self

### STRATEGIES:

- internally name the feeling to ourselves ('name it to tame it')
- intentionally look for strengths and resilience in the other person
- remind self how resilient others are
- how often great difficulty leads to good outcomes
- call on faith; prayer
- spiritual beliefs- 'this person has their own path'
- therapy for self when indicated

## STAY IN AFFECTIVE EMPATHY

**Awareness of:** feeling affective empathy

**Feels like:** whatever the other person is feeling

**Desire:** to stay in the affective empathy state

**Common reasons:** to understand what others are feeling

- to propel to action in protecting self or others
- positive emotions, bonding

### STRATEGIES:

- move into action to protect
- verbalize what we are feeling to the person to connect  
*(I'm feeling really sad/scared/angry, I wonder if that is what you are feeling?)*

## MOVING FROM BIAS, JUDGMENT TO COGNITIVE EMPATHY

**Awareness of:** not feeling empathy for someone

**Feels like:** others are not 100% human; negative judgments; 'unreal others'

**Desire:** to feel empathy for this person

### Common reasons:

- empathy is a professional obligation
- discomfort with feeling judgment/dislike
- wish to improve relations with a friend or family member
- actively correcting negative bias for an 'outgroup'

### STRATEGIES:

- imagine the person as a child
- imagine the possibility they experienced significant hardships as a child
- bring to mind positive experiences with another in the same outgroup (for racism)
- imagine them as a family member
- imagine commonalities with the person

## STAY IN ANGER OR DISCONNECT

**Awareness of:** not feeling empathy for someone

**Feels like:** anger, numbness, disconnection

**Desire:** to 'stay in anger or disconnect'

### Common reasons:

- we are in danger from this person
- we need to leave this person/situation
- we need to protect ourselves or others

### STRATEGIES:

- take action to leave/disconnect
- take action to protect self or others

# — Soothing Affective Empathy



Notice & Name



Self-  
compassion



Remind self of  
other's god





When do you most feel  
painful affective  
empathy?

What can you tell  
yourself/do when you  
notice this?

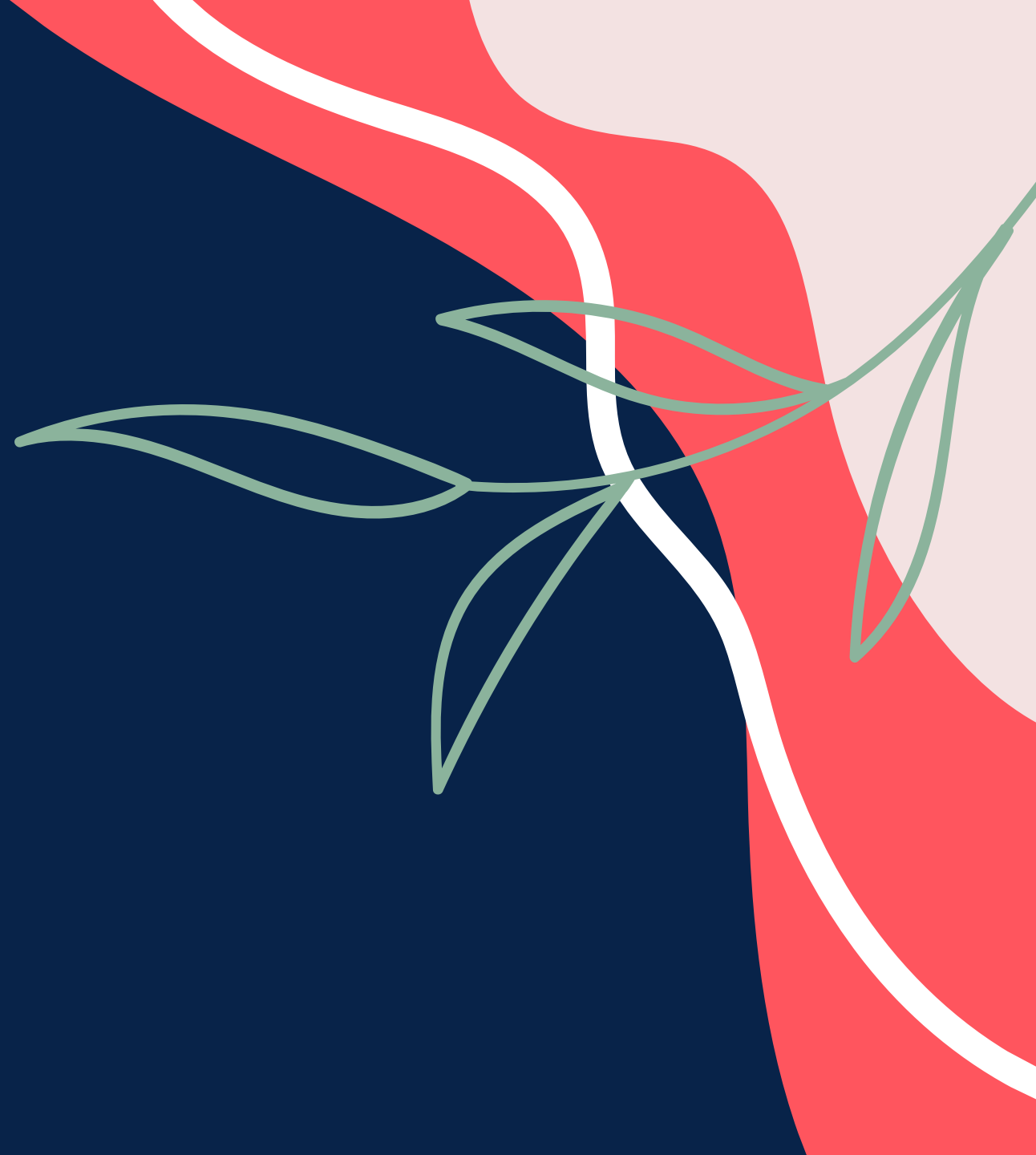




# The Perfectionism Trap

# Problems with perfectionism

- Driven by outside approval
- Impossible; we will always fall short
- Never good enough
- Makes us relentlessly criticize ourselves
- Makes us more critical of others
- Makes us less apt to try new things





# Empathic Communication with Ourselves

Affirming Strengths

**Normalizing**

Empathic Reflection

**Non-judgment**

Acknowledging Feelings



# Course Companion Guide

*Pages 12-14 & 46-53*

## Montana Primary Care Association: Integrated Team Care Front Office Support Guide





[www.emorrisonconsulting.com](http://www.emorrisonconsulting.com)



We need to hear from you!