

Mindfulness Monday Message #48 – 24 April 2017

One of the topics that CRANAplus Bush Support Services psychologists cover in the resilience building workshops is burn-out. There are two common symptoms of burn-out- exhaustion and feeling like you don't care any more. Exhaustion, in particular is an important sign to flag. Not only does it mean that you are probably working too many hours, but it can often lead to poor lifestyle choices as well.

If you are feeling at risk of burn-out, it is important to do something about it. Often the cause of the stress is not so much the job itself but the decisions that we make about the way we carry out the job.

There are a number of reflective questions that are helpful in starting to deal with burn-out. The first is thinking about the source of stress in a way that is self compassionate. Sometimes it is a toxic work environment. Another reason may be that the demands of the job outweigh the available hours. Naming the source allows you to start thinking about ways of slowly addressing the problem. Remember, slowly and steadily wins the race and sometimes it is important to do only a small thing differently to start.

The second helpful step is to identify where in your body you experience stress. Some stress points are obvious. Doing a body scan, mindful meditation may help you find previously unrecognised places where stress needs to be acknowledged and let go.

The third step is talking. Talking to work colleagues, family and friends helps you to get perspective. It also allows fresh ideas and ways of dealing with stress into your thinking.

Finally, a regular Mindfulness practice will help you to stay much more connected with what is going on inside your head and body. So many times people report burnt-out "creeping up" on them, and Mindfulness is a way to take control sooner rather than later.

Dr. Annmaree Wilson