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Peer Group Chat Summary

Date: 02.11.2023

Topic: Coping with Overwhelm

Description: Sometimes life can get a little bit too much and we may start to feel very overwhelmed. Let's come together to discuss our lived experiences and strategies for coping with overwhelm. This discussion could be a great time to learn some new coping techniques or contribute to someone else's recovery.

Summary of discussion:

How, when and why we might experience feelings of overwhelm.

We might feel overwhelm when...

- Things are 'too much'
- There has been Information or input overload
- We set ourselves a lot of things to do which can be super overwhelming, especially when we are battling with mental health as well! For example; Passing exams, legal matters, everyday things.

How/ Overwhelm might look like...

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Frustration
- Feeling like it's all too much
- Not knowing how to tackle everything that is happening (or a big event that seems too big to tackle all at once.)

Why/ Overwhelm might happen because...

- Capacity to cope is exhausted
- Strategies and tools that might help us cope with and recover from overwhelm
 - Break things down to smaller and easier tasks,
 - Breathing exercises
 - Taking it hour by hour
 - Journaling
 - Crying
 - There are lots of mind-body techniques that help you let go of arousal or anxiety and promote focus or reflection
 - Simplifying situations enables me to remove variables that just add to the complexity of feeling overwhelmed

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- How to lessen experiences of overwhelm, and supports that could help
 - Having supports that can be there for us when we need validation, or even just a shoulder to lean on when we are feeling overwhelmed seems to be really important (whether that's from our family, our psychologists, GPs, or the SANE Forums.)
 - Support others by holding space for them, being non-judgmental, listening to them for as long as they need, and trying not to fix their problem, while also making them feel loved and cared for.
 - Picking out a single corner of your messy situation and applying yourself to improving just that one bit.
 - Being aware of our triggers could help to minimise feelings of overwhelm before they begin.

Discussion questions:

Q1. What is your experience with overwhelm? When might you experience overwhelm?

Q2. What are some strategies and/or tools you use to cope with experiences of overwhelm?

Q3. Does stigma impact your sharing your feelings of overwhelm with others? If so, how? If not, why do you think this might be?

Q4. What kinds of support would be helpful when you are experiencing overwhelm? Do you have any of these supports in place and/or how could you engage these supports?

Q5. What kind of factors might help lessen experiences of overwhelm?

Q6. How could you support someone if they were experiencing overwhelm?

Q7. What might you find helpful in recovering from an experience of overwhelm?

Resources

These are the resources that were shared during the session:

- Overcoming Overwhelm Ted Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOEdu-mTkZA>
- Let's Talk About ... Overwhelm: <https://letstalkaboutmentalhealth.com.au/2022/09/04/overwhelm/>
- How to Take Care of Yourself When You're Feeling Overwhelmed: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2021/03/how-to-take-care-of-yourself-when-youre-feeling-overwhelmed/>

Continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums by following this link!



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<https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Coping-with-Overwhelm-Thursday-2nd-November-2023/m-p/1354845#M351883>

Any ideas for topics?

We are always looking to improve and make the sessions as valuable as possible. If you have suggestions for group topics, please add them to the suggestion box on this page: [Peer Group Chat \(sane.org\)](#)

If you would like to provide feedback on the groups, please email feedback@sane.org.