Objectives

- Identify physician and patient benefits of improving physician well-being
- Identify cognitions which allow a dedicated physician to engage in necessary self-care
- List 2 personalized strategies for improving participant well-being

Statistics

- An estimated 50% of practicing physicians report some level of burnout.
- Primary Care physicians and female physicians are at higher risk.
- 300 – 400 medical students and physicians complete suicide annually.

Physician Wellbeing impacts

- Medical errors and malpractice suits
- Incidence of substance abuse, car accidents, family discord
- Quality of patient care, patient satisfaction, trust, confidence, and adherence

Factors related to burnout risk

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Loss of the sense of Personal Accomplishment


The Psychological Contract

- Quote
  - ... do whatever was necessary to promote patient care
  - ... expect respect, equipment to do the job, and freedom from financial anxieties
  - The double cross leads to increased stress and diminished morale.

Build Resilience
Reduce Stress Level
Reduce Stress Impact
Permission

If there is a problem
- Permission to recognize a problem
  - Fundamental Attribution Error – overestimating personal factors and underestimating the power of the situation
  - Family Medicine and the circumstances that we practice in are hard
  - Perhaps we should expect poor coping as a normal response and prevent for all.

Then there is something wrong with me
- A real professional would be able to handle this
- Maybe I’m an imposter

Pearls – Permission for self-care
- The attitude that limit-setting and self-care is lazy and/or selfish is a set up.
- You change the oil in your car, fill it up, maintain it, and use it within its limits for weight, temperature, speed, etc.
- Identify the ways in which others benefit from your limit-setting
  - Errors, patience, flexibility for emergencies, etc.
  - Role modeling – do you want our children or your patients to care for themselves like you do?

Pearls – Reduce stress: not all tasks are equally important.
- Everyone prioritizes – trying to do it all may mean that nothing gets done well.
  - Agenda setting
  - Delegation
- Make sure your investments in time and effort are worth it
  - Chit-chat
  - Trying to convince patients

Permission to care for mental health problems
- Stigma despite increased relative risk
- Metaphor
- Gymnasts and stress fractures
- Even sub-syndromal levels can impact professional behaviors
Manage debt and your cash

Hard Work — Deserve

- Vicious cycle
- Ongoing stress/anxiety
- May leave you with inadequate freedom
- Have adequate savings
- Getting and using a financial advisor has been shown to improve physician well-being

More stress reduction

- Professional Development
  - Clinical
  - Practice Management
  - Adequate administrative support

Pearls - Reducing the impact that stress has on you

- A lot of stress is caused by things about the job we cannot control.
- Reflective practice – increase awareness of how your work impacts you. (Balint, narrative writing, etc.)
- Changing your expectations can provide relief.
  - You will be human, not perfect
  - Hassles will happen; they are a part of a busy, meaningful life
  - Measure your success based on things that you can reasonably control.
- Reducing fight-or-flight response – relaxation, mindfulness, stress inoculation
- Get support
- Humor

The patient satisfaction trap

- The unconscious expectation that when we do things correctly, patients will be happy, get well, and appreciate what we do is toxic.
- If your patients are always happy with you, then you are not setting enough limits.
- You can’t control their reactions.
- You can control what is important to you
  - Speaking respectfully
  - Let their problems be their problems
  - The most caring thing to do is to stick to what you believe is medically best

Pearls – Increasing resilience

- Self-care: sleep, exercise, nutrition
- Healthy philosophical outlook – optimism and reduced cynicism
- Find meaning in your work
- Have other things not work related that are meaning, fun, or give a sense of mastery
- Good quality family and social relationships
- Have a mentor/be a mentor
- Religious or Spiritual activity

Give at least as much (and preferably more) attention to successes as problems
On-line Resources

- www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu
- University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center
- http://www.viacharacter.org
- Signature Strengths
- ePhysicianHealth.com
- Canadian resource site

Activity Options

- Mindfulness (reducing impact)
- Good things (resilience)
- Personal Bill of Rights (permissions)
- Back to basics (resilience)
- Stress inoculation (reducing impact)
- Gratitude (resilience and reducing impact)
- Narrative Writing (reducing impact and resilience)
- Song parody (Reducing impact)

Personal Bill of Rights

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values and standards.
3. I have the right to express my feelings – positive or negative.
4. I have the right to make mistakes and not be perfect.
5. I have the right to determine my own priorities.
6. I have the right not to be responsible for others’ behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
7. I have the right to feel afraid or angry – even at someone I love.
8. I have the right to say “I don’t know.”
9. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
10. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
11. I have the right to accommodate the needs of my body.
12. I have the right to be happy.

Summary

- Self-care benefits you, your family, & patients, models for others, and ultimately helps your community.
- Do it for everyone else, if not for yourself.
- Self-care makes you more (efficient, effective, responsive, resilient, etc.)
- It is illogical to expect that you will not need limits, support, and positive reinforcement to function at your best.
- Choose the self-care that is best for you
  - Preference
  - Change what you can, find a way to cope with the rest
  - If it works do more of it

What strategies have worked for you?

Thank you!

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EB Personal Strategies to Prevent Burnout

- Influence happiness through personal values and choices
- Spending time with family and friends
- Religious or spiritual activity
- Self-care (nutrition, exercise)
- Adopting a healthy philosophical outlook, optimistic world view
- A supportive spouse or partner


EB Work Strategies to Prevent Burnout

- Control over environment: workload
- Acknowledge what you cannot control
- Finding meaning in work
- Setting limits
- Having a mentor, being a mentor
- Having adequate administrative support systems
- Reflective practice: reflecting on how our practice affects you personally and professionally, celebrate the special moments, evaluate what and if you can change
- Get a financial advisor and use them
- Keep up to date on professional development – clinical and non-clinical (practice management)
- Cultivate methods of personal renewal, emotional self-awareness, connection with social support systems, and a sense of mastery and meaning in their work