

# Physician Wellness: Avoiding Burnout, Finding Balance

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# Physician Burnout:

How Big a Problem  
AKA Why Do We Care

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## Definition of Burnout

- The **Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)** (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a) is the most commonly used instrument for measuring **burnout**
  - MBI captures three dimensions of **burnout**:
    - emotional exhaustion
    - depersonalization
    - personal accomplishment
- Burnout, is a physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress \*
- The psychiatric definition is an exceptionally mediated job-related dysphoric and dysfunctional state in an individual without major psychopathology\*
  - \*The Very Serious Issue of Physician Burnout - *Medscape* - Nov 29, 2012

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## What is the Result of Unaddressed Burnout

- Suicide among physicians occurs at a higher rate than any other profession
  - Worse than lawyers or dentists
- Physician suicide occurs at more than twice the rate of the general population
- It affects the quality of care we provide our patients

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## Why Does Burnout Occur

- There is a dynamic between:
  - Power: are you powerful, empowered or powerless
  - Purpose: Are we takers or givers – i.e., is the world all about you or all about others
  - The interaction of these factors leads to one of four mindsets:
    - A Thriver: I have the power to make a difference and I will be a giver
    - A Victim: I have no power and I need to look out for myself
    - A Controller: I have the power and will make others suffer by being a taker
    - A Bystander: I don't have any power and I wish there was something I could do

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## Key Statistics

- Medscape's Physician Lifestyle Report 2017
  - Percentages ranged from 42% of psychiatrists to 59% of ER doctors
  - A/I physicians reported 43% were burned out but n was low
- Medscape's 2018 Report on Burnout and Depression
  - 42% of all physicians identified burnout
  - 3% reported severe or clinical depression
  - 12% reported colloquial depression (feeling down)
  - 44% of A/I physicians reported burnout
  - 13% of A/I doctors reported depression and burnout
- Here's the Rub
  - In the 2017 Survey, A/I specialists reported more severe burnout when experienced (6<sup>th</sup> most severe out of all specialties reporting)

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## What is Being Done to Address This

- Multiple projects within the AAAAI Mentorship Program
- ACAAI Taskforce is conducting a disciplined review including administering the MBI to multiple A/I specialists and focus groups at national and regional meetings to get more information
- AMA Steps Forward
- Others

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## How to Identify Burnout in Yourself and Others

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## What are the Signs?

- Depleted enthusiasm
  - Reduced feeling
  - Increased cynicism
  - Increased administrative tasks
- Social isolation
  - Reverse of normal thoughts- More time at work, isolating from family and friends
  - Reduced passion
  - Increased pessimism
  - Increased administrative tasks

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## What are the Signs?

- Emotional Volatility
  - Irritability
  - Sadness
  - Frustration
  - Lack of self awareness
- Patient Depersonalization
  - Consistent negativity or antipathy

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## What are the Signs?

- Chemical stimulation
  - Food
  - Stimulants
  - Energy drinks/caffeine
  - Drug Use
- Change in sleep habits
  - Lack of optimism
- Decreased physical activity

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## Set Up for Burnout

- You have high tolerance to stress
- You have a chaotic practice
- Lack of control over your work schedule and free time
- Your job interferes with family events
- You don't take care of yourself

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## Further Delving

- The practice of clinical medicine is stressful
  - Patients
  - Business
  - Leadership
- Having a life is not taught
  - Residency is the opposite
  - Work until we can't do it any longer, otherwise we are weak
  - Home stressors are adding to work stressors

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## Interventions to Address Burnout

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## Interventions in Medical School (Mayo Model)

- Arranging visits with a mental health counselor for all matriculating students
- Teaching stress management, resilience and mindfulness skills
- Subsidizing on-campus fitness center access for all students
- Making assessments pass/fail during the pre-clinical years
- Funding student-run wellness activities

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## Further Delving

- Medical education conditioning
  - Workaholic
  - Superhero
  - Perfectionist
  - Lone Ranger
- Leadership skills are weak for your supervisors

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**1 Your experience with burnout**
2 Tell us about yourself
3 See your results

For questions 1-10, please choose the answer that best describes your experience.

*All fields required unless otherwise noted.*

1. Overall, I am satisfied with my current job:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

2. I feel a great deal of stress because of my job:

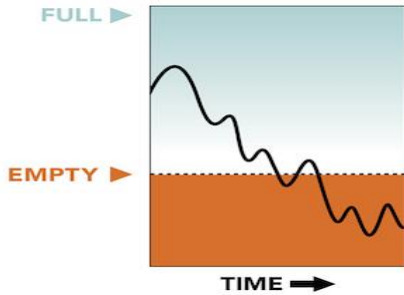
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

3. Using your own definition of "burnout," please select one of the answers below:


I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout.

**YOUR ENERGY ACCOUNT: FULL OR EMPTY?**

We withdraw energy from this account for the activities of our life and work. We deposit energy to this account during times of rest and rebalance. Burnout occurs when there is a negative balance over time.



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# Office Systems & Solutions

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## Work Interventions

- Become one with your EMR
  - Superuser
  - Document the minimally necessary data set
  - Use the EMR to **automate what you can**
  - Team approach to documenting
  - Pilot a scribe automate

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## Philosophy

- You are the apex earner/producer in your office, only do what you absolutely cannot delegate to another qualified staff member
- If you do what you do best (see patients) and have others do as much as possible (PA's, documentation, etc.) you will be happier and so will your patients
- Flashback to last year

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## Further Work Interventions

- Flexible scheduling of providers
- MAs, RNs, other support staff with the same providers
- Consider outsourcing complex tasks-coding, etc.
- Train your staff to their maximum skill level

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## Further Work Interventions

- Videos
- Written materials
- Electronic links
- 6 minute team huddle

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## Practice Systems/Management Resources

- AMA Steps Forward
- AAAAI Practice Management Resources
- AAAAI Practice Management Committee
- ACAAI has many tools as well if you belong to both organizations
- AAPL

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# Personal Interventions

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## Outside Interventions

- Create a life calendar and follow through with listing and activities listed
  - Defend the calendar and say the magic word - NO
  - Take stock of what your desires are and prioritize them regularly
    - Promotion
    - Parenting

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## Outside Interventions

- Set up date/activity nights
- Make a bucket list and put some skin in the game
- Make a weekly bucket list and pick 2-3 things to put on it
- Make a boundary ritual for when you are done with work. Change of clothes, cleansing breath, walking the dog.

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## Further Personal Interventions

- Gratitude journal
- Writing inspiring patient stories
- Learning to manage your time and finances
- Look at what your Mission Statement is and what you want as your legacy
- Develop your spiritual practice
- Consider a support group
- Organize with peers for support
- Seek professional help

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## Find Meaning Outside of Work

- Volunteering
- New task
- Mindfulness classes
- Connect with your body
- Have fun!!!

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## Advocacy & Policy Relating to Physician Wellness

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# Volunteer

- Your organizations need you:
  - AAAAI
    - Leadership Institute Mentorship Projects
    - Leadership Institute
    - Committees
  - ACAAI
    - Physician Wellness Taskforce has been convened
    - Facebook invite only physician wellness page
    - Advocacy Council
  - AMA
    - Steps Forward
    - National Policy
  - AAPL
    - Physician Wellness Courses for leaders of organizations
  - RSLAAIS
    - State and local level problem solving

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# Volunteer

- Getting outside of yourself can help you to refocus on the needs of others and become a giver again
- It is also empowering
- The combination of empowerment and a giving nature results in a Thriver mentality

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