

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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Is Burnout Depression?

- There is likely a continuum from stressor to depressor to depression*
- There are some semantic arguments among experts and to whether they are separate and distinct entities or overlapping**
- Remember previous definition includes no major psychopathology
- Severe burnout has an odds ratio for depression of 92.78*
 - *Priviteri, M. Medscape. 5/2018
 - **Schonfeld, I. Medscape. 7/2018

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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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Additional Contributors to Burnout

- High debt in graduating physicians
 - Average debt now approximately \$250,000
- Toxic training environments
- Stigma of admitting to mental illness
- Not knowing where to go for help
- Long Term Job Satisfaction Requires
 1. [Autonomy](#)—This is under assault!
 - Some organizations even mandate wellness training
 2. Mastery
 3. Purpose

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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 (6th 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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HOME | MODULES | EVENTS | HOW IT WORKS

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

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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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

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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
- ACAA 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
 - ACAA
 - 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 and restores purpose
- The combination of empowerment and a giving nature results in a Thriver mentality

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Donate

- If you cannot volunteer donate
- Your donations to AAAAI help to fund
 - Ask the expert billing
 - National trip to DC to advocate for our specialty
 - Full time support staff who make our organization work
 - Future research to improve care for our patients

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Advocate/Educate

- Speak out for your patients and our specialty to:
 - Local elected officials
 - State Representatives and Senators
 - Identify especially any physicians in your legislatures
- Involve your patients:
 - We have had more success when we have asked patients to help us with PA's
 - Explain delays and issues in their care and how they can advocate for themselves

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References

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