Professional Health and Wellness:
Managing Stress and Balancing Energy

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Central Group on Educational Affairs
March, 2012
Professional Health and Wellness

The ethics of self-care:

“The medical academy's primary ethical imperative may be to care for others, but this imperative is meaningless if it is divorced from the imperative to care for oneself. How can we hope to care for others, after all, if we ourselves, are crippled by ill health, burnout or resentment?” “…medical academics must turn to an ethics that not only encourages, but even demands care of self.”

Goals

• Overall the purpose of the session is to engage academic medical educators in a self-reflection and interactive practice experience to help them focus on their own professional health and wellness as it relates to stress, burnout and workplace energy.
Objectives

As a result of participating in this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Identify risk factors for and discuss prevention of stress and burnout as academic faculty members.
2. Complete their own self-reflection action plan for improving professional health and wellness in order to prevent stress and burnout.
3. Practice relaxation and stress management techniques.
Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Workplace stress & burnout
3. Managing workplace energy
4. Practice: Dealing with stress and stress reactions
5. Summary
Professional Health & Wellness
Importance & Evidence

- 30-60% MD have distress and burnout
- Stigma & anonymity
- Reduced use of care by physician
- Little education and training
- Female vs. male
- Physician suicide risk

http://www.aamc.org/members/gwims/statistics/stats09/start.htm  
“High physician suicide rates suggest lack of treatment for depression.” - MD Consult News June 11, 2008
Professional Health and Wellness

• No definition exists.

• In CPH:
  – PHW: the health and wellness of an individual’s psychological, physical, emotional and spiritual being in relationship to their work & home environments
  – Includes the individual, their work environment and their home environment
Professional Health & Wellness

- Work Environment
  - Mind
  - Soul
- Home Environment
  - Body
  - Emotion
  - Self-Care
Self-Awareness

“Self-awareness means having a deep understanding of one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. People with strong self-awareness are neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful. Rather, they are honest – with themselves and with others.”

Professional Health & Wellness Spectrum

- High Functioning
  - High Functioning
  - High Productivity
- Fair Functioning
  - Fair Functioning
  - Decreasing Productivity
- Fair Functioning
  - Reduced Productivity
  - Relationships Suffer
- Fair-Not Functioning
  - Fair-Not Functioning
  - Fair-Not Productive
  - Institution & Family Loses

Coping Mechanisms
- Failing
- Strong
- No Coping

Physical
- Mental
- Emotional
- Spiritual

Professionally Healthy & Well
- Stressed
  - Coping Mechanisms Strong
- Burnout
  - Coping Mechanisms Failing
- Risk of MH issues and suicide
- No Coping Mechanisms
Stress & Burnout

- Stress and burnout occurs for different reasons in different individuals.
- Work load ≠ level of stress or burnout in all situations.
- Multifactorial
Stress

“Into each one’s life, some stress must come…

…but it is how you handle it that is important.”

~me
Self-Assessments

- What stresses you out?
- Measure your stress level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxious</th>
<th>Run Down</th>
<th>Stressed out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exhausted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ready to cave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress free</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burnt out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Doctor Dewey Insto-Matic, Stress-O-Meter
Definition - Stress

• Stress can be defined as:
  – d: a state resulting from a stress; especially: one of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to **alter an existent equilibrium** <job-related **stress**> Webster’s dictionary
Stress & Productivity

- No Prolonged Stress

- Situational Stress

- Productive Stress

- Prolonged Stress

- Declining Function

- Burnout

- Stressed

- Reduced Cognition

- “Impairment” ???

- Non-Functional
Managing Individual Stress

Seven Key Areas:

1. Sleep
2. Balanced meals
3. Physical activity
4. Socialization
5. Vacations/down times
6. Spiritual engagement
7. Have a physician
Two systems interact

The external system
Functional & nurturing

Hospital/Clinic

“The Perfect Storm”

Physician

The internal system
Good skills

Dysfunctional

Poor skills
Figure 1
Spectrum of Disruptive Behaviors

**Aggressive**
- Inappropriate anger, threats
- Yelling, publicly degrading team members
- Intimidating staff, patients, colleagues, etc.
- Pushing, throwing objects
- Swearing
- Outburst of anger & physical abuse

**Passive**
- Chronically late
- Failure to return calls
- Inappropriate/inadequate chart notes
- Avoiding meetings & individuals
- Non-participation
- Ill-prepared, not prepared

**Hostile notes, emails**
- Derogatory comments about institution, hospital, group, etc.
- Inappropriate joking
- Sexual Harassment
- Complaining, blaming

We can control:
1. Identifying triggers
2. Prevent some flooding
3. React to flooding by using skills
**Flooding***

• “this means you feel so stressed that you become emotionally and physically overwhelmed…”

• “Pounding heart, sweaty hands, and shallow breathing.”

• “When you’re in this state of mind…you are not capable of hearing new information or accepting influence.”

You or them
How’s that working for you?

If you *always* do
What you *always* did,
You’ll *always* get
What you *always* got...
SKILLS TO USE WHEN FLOODING

GROUNDING

• Categories exercise
• Judge versus describe
• Mindfulness with all senses
• Breathe
SKILLS TO USE WHEN FLOODING

SPECIFIC PHRASES

• You may be right.
• Give me a minute, I’ll get right back to you.
• I know this may be frustrating, I want to address your concerns.
• Tell me how I can help you.
• Glad you are here.
SKILLS TO USE WHEN FLOODING

SPECIFIC PHRASES

• *This may be scary, I will do my best to help.*

• *I’m sorry I am running late, and I am so glad you waited for me.*

• *Let’s weigh the pros and cons.*

• *I may not be able to help you with that. However, we will figure out who can.*
TALK TO SOMEONE WHO CAN GIVE YOU SUPPORT AND PERSPECTIVE
ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

When asking for something, use the acronym – DRAN

Describe
Reinforce
Assert
Negotiate
Describe

• Describe the other person’s behavior objectively
• Use concrete terms
• Describe a specified time, place & frequency of action
• Describe the action, not the “motive”
Reinforce

• Recognize the other person’s past efforts
Assert Directly & Specifically

• Express your feelings
• Express them calmly
• State feelings in a positive manner
• Direct yourself to the offending behavior, not the entire person’s character
• Ask explicitly for change in the other person’s behavior
Negotiate: Work Towards A Compromise That is Reasonable

• Request a small change at first
• Take into account whether the person can meet your needs or goals
• Specify behaviors you are willing to change
• Make consequences explicit
• Reward positive changes
Practice using DRAN

Goal
To decrease the incidence of unprofessional behavior and positively influence a culture of professionalism.

Objectives
1. To practice a new skill in a safe environment.
2. To deliver a brief nonjudgmental message regarding a colleague’s behavior.
Practice Ground Rules

• You are practicing – mistakes are ok.
• 1 case
• Read the case as written
• Act according to the case
• Each person takes turn practicing DRAN using same case; then switch
• Person listening uses check list to assess other’s performance
Patient was admitted through the ER with presumed sepsis. After IV pressors and 12 hrs of ER observation, vitals are stable and pt is transferred to the floor on broad spectrum antibiotics. ER attending checks on pt 6 hrs later and finds no antibiotics ordered on the floor. The attending pages the nurse to discuss what happened to the antibiotics.

- D - describe
- R - reinforce
- A – assert
- N - negotiate
Discussion

• What did you notice?
• What barriers might stop you from using DRAN?

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Burnout
Definition - Burnout

- Burnout can be defined as:
  - **a**: exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of **prolonged stress or frustration**
  - **b**: a person suffering from burnout. Webster’s dictionary
Burnout

“In the current climate, burnout thrives in the workplace. Burnout is always more likely when there is a major mismatch between the nature of the job and the nature of the person who does the job.”

~Christina Maslach

The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It. Maslach & Leiter pg 9; 1997
Six Sources of Burnout

1. Work overload*
2. Lack of control
3. Insufficient reward
4. Unfairness
5. Breakdown of community
6. Value conflict

Risk Factors for Burnout

- Single
- Gender/sexual orientation
- ># of children at home
- Family problems
- Mid-late career
- Previous mental health issues (depression)
- Fatigue & sleep deprivation
- General dissatisfaction
- Alcohol and drugs
- Minority/international
- Teaching & research demands
- Potential litigation

Puddester D. West J Med 2001;174:5-7
Myers MJ West J Med 2001;174:30-33
Gautam M West J Med 2001;174:37-41
Symptoms of Burnout

1. Chronic exhaustion
2. Cynical and detached
3. Increasingly ineffective at work (distressed behaviors)
4. Leads to:
   1. isolation
   2. avoidance
   3. interpersonal conflicts
   4. high turnover

Protective Factors

• Personal:
  – Focus on self care first – listen to your body
  – Address Maslach’s 6 sources of burnout
  – Recognize sources of frustration
  – Influence happiness through personal values and choices
  – Adapt a healthy philosophy/outlook
  – Spend time with family & friends
  – A supportive spouse or partner
  – Engage in religious or spiritual activity
  – Hobbies
  – Mentor (s)
Protective Factors

• Work:
  – Address Maslach’s 6 sources of burnout
  – Identify needs and seek ways to gain control
  – Find meaning in work (value)
  – Set limits and maintain balance – just say no
  – Plan ahead and eliminate distractions
  – Have a mentor
  – Obtain adequate administrative support
  – Learn about burnout and stress management*

Managing Energy

- HBR article by Schwartz and McCarthy

1. Physical Energy
2. Emotional Energy
3. Spiritual Energy
4. Mental Energy

Managing Energy

“Longer days at the office don’t work because time is a limited resource. But personal energy is renewable…By fostering deceptively simple rituals that help employees regularly replenish their energy, organizations build worker’s physical, emotional, and mental resilience.”

~Schwartz & McCarthy

Physical Energy

- Eating and sleeping well
- Physical activity
- Take breaks
- Identify your stressors
- Manage and reduce stress
  - Office stressors
  - Home stressors

Emotional Energy

• Fuel positive emotions & defuse negative emotions
  • Express appreciation to others
  • Tell a different story “Power of Positive Thinking”
  • Use a different lens: Reverse, long and wide

• Have mentors, coaches, confidants

• Self-identify which method works best for you

Spiritual Energy

• Identify your “sweet spots”
  – What you enjoy the most; do the best at and are the most important to you
• Allocate time and energy to the positives
• Live your core values
• Engage in spiritual renewals

Mental Energy

- Reduce interruptions “switching times”
- Designate “sprint zones” 90-120 m
- Plan, prioritize, and accomplish
- Self-identify how you plan best
  - Showers, car drive, exercising, etc.
  - Check lists or to do lists
  - Others help provide directions

Family

- Family – it is your crystal ball!!
- Every other ball bounces
- Family ball:
  - Delicate
  - Precious
  - Full of love
  - Irreplaceable
  - Indispensable
Avoid

• Chronic stress
  – Learn stress management
  – Take vacations; detach
  – Leave, transfer ??

• Burnout
  – Address 6 sources
  – Build personal resiliency
  – Get help
Top 10 Managing Energy Tips

1. Self care – all the time; first!
2. Listen to self
3. Identify needs
4. Define limits - Just Say NO!
5. Plan appropriately
6. Reduce distractions
7. Address office culture
8. Work place training on burnout*
9. Address Maslach’s 6 sources of burnout
10. Have mentors, coaches, friends

Managing Failures & Successes
Individual Action Plan

• 10 minutes to complete
• Rest at home if needed
• Make it happen:
  
  Specific and clear Plan/Timetable
  Behavior not attitude What are your personal barriers?
  Something you can count When will you start?
Resources

- PFWP/EAP or State physician health programs
- Primary care provider
- Private counseling services
- Personal coaches – Center for Women in Medicine
- Substance services: AA, NA, etc.
- 1-800-273-TALK: suicide prevention hotline
- Other: YMCA/YWCA, Massage envy, wellness programs, health plus, etc.
Summary: Take Home Points

1. You are valuable! Self-care is your foundation to vitality and remaining professional.
2. Stress happens: Look for, anticipate, and manage stress.
3. Take action immediately to reduce stress and avoid burnout.
4. Take advantage of the valuable resources available to physicians – bottom line is get help!
“The first wealth is health.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

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