The Prevention and Treatment of Physician Burnout

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Palm Beach County Medical Society
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Disclosures

No financial disclosures
Objectives

1. Define and identify the signs of physician burnout
2. Understand some of the reasons behind the increase in physician burnout
3. Learn tools and techniques to reduce burnout and improve wellness
What is “burnout?”

- Exhaustion (emotional and physical)
- Loss of enthusiasm for work with feelings of cynicism
- Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
Exhaustion
Cynicism and detachment
Feeling ineffective or lack of accomplishment
Physician Burnout and Depression

- Burned out: 42%
- Colloquially depressed: 12%
- Clinically depressed: 3%

Medscape 2018
Which Physicians Are the Happiest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Outside Work</th>
<th>At Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychiatry &amp; Mental Health</td>
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<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nephrology</td>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulmonary Medicine</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious Disease</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pathology</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthopedics</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anesthesiology</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ob/Gyn</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology</td>
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<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
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<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diabetes &amp; Endocrinology</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic Surgery</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oncology</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Medicine</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radiology</td>
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<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urology</td>
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<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatology</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Care</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
<td>24%</td>
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Medscape Burnout and Bias Published Jan 2016

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What Are the Causes of Burnout?

- Too many bureaucratic tasks
- Spending too many hours at work
- Feeling like just a cog in the wheel
- Income not high enough
- Present and future impact of Affordable Care Act
- Inability to provide patients with quality care they need
- Too many difficult patients
- Lack of professional fulfillment
- Increasing computerization of practice
- Compassion fatigue
- Difficult employer
- Difficult colleagues or staff

1 = Not at all important
7 = Extremely important
Electronic health records

- Clicking: 4000 x/day in the average ER

- Alert fatigue

- Computerized physician order entry
SAY "MEANINGFUL USE"

ONE MORE TIME
Culture of medical training

I’M GOING TO WRITE YOU A PRESCRIPTION. IT’S CALLED: SUCK IT UP

SLEEP?
YOU CAN SLEEP WHEN YOU’RE DEAD
Emotional demands on the psyche

- Sudden exposure to illness and death - often repressed / unexamined
- Empathy levels plummet during 3rd year med school
Doctor personality traits

- We’re often perfectionists
- We fear mistakes / bad outcomes
- We don’t forgive ourselves
THE ONLY PATIENT SATISFACTION QUESTION THAT MATTERS...

DID YOU DIE??
Evidence-based interventions

- Organizational
  - Workload reduction
  - Flexible schedules
  - Protected time for wellness
  - Work-process modifications
  - Culture change

- Individual
  - Positive psychology
  - Improved communication skills
  - Self-care
  - Counseling/ coaching
Positive psychology: change your thinking

- Cognitive reframing
- Mindfulness
- Gratitude training
- “Good enough” vs perfection
“Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it.”

-Lou Holtz

Cognitive reframing
Avoid catastrophizing
Mind Full, or Mindful?
Mindfulness techniques

- Enjoy simple pleasures
- Take a walk outside
- Practice deep conscious breathing
Gratitude training
Perfectionism vs “Good Enough” (Fixed vs Growth Mindset)
Use psychology to improve communication skills

- Improve patient interactions
- Create more efficient office visits
- Improve patient satisfaction and outcomes
Learn to show empathy
Showing empathy

- Smile (practice)
- Listening: Body language / active listening cues
- Emotional mirroring and clarification
- Validation of emotions (you don’t have to agree with them!)

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Listening

- Sit down if you can
- Don’t interrupt
- Act interested
- Even if you don’t take action, make sure the patient FEELS heard
Emotional mirroring and validation

1. Identify the emotional state (anger, anxiety, etc).

2. Practice emotional mirroring by stating how you think the person is feeling. Ask if you are correct.

3. If yes, validate the emotion. If no, get clarification, and re-state the emotion, validating the correct emotion.
Self-care

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Medical
Emotional Self-Care

SHARE YOUR EMOTIONS
SET BOUNDARIES
SCHEDULE YOUR TIME
GET SUPPORT
Sharing emotions

- Journaling
- Peer group processing
- Therapy

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Setting boundaries

Understand
- Understand your motivations

Say no
- Say ‘no’ to activities that don’t add value to your life - ‘no’ is a complete sentence!

Practice
- Practice feeling OK when you say no

Don’t take
- Don’t take your work home
Schedule your time

- Regularly schedule time off from work for personal needs
- Prioritize your health - medical appointments
- Schedule non-work activities and make them non-negotiable
  - Exercise
  - Recreation
  - Dates
  - Time alone
- Make time for hobbies
Get support

You can’t do it all!

Ask for help from your partner, family member, friends

Hire professional help if possible
Get specialized help and support

PBCMS Physician Wellness Program

Confidential scheduling 1-800-530-9757

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Remember: You always have a choice!