Self-Care for Healthcare Providers

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Disclosures

• Alisa Burpee maintains a private practice in Seattle, WA. She does not have any financial relationships with commercial interests.
Learning Objectives

• Define burnout and prevalence rates
• Identify warning signs and symptoms of burnout
• Create a self-care regimen that can be implemented to promote wellness and sustainability
What did you learn about the potential for burnout and how to care for yourself as a physician?
Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

• What is it?
  • Physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding or stressful situations
  • Disillusionment and negative feelings
    • Loss of sense of meaningful work
    • Reduced sense of accomplishment
    • Skepticism and distrust
How common is burnout in physicians?

- According to several studies, approximately 50% of American doctors exhibit signs of burnout (an increase of about 10% since 2011)
- Satisfaction with work-life balance also declined between 2011 and 2014
- Possible consequences include:
  - negative effects on patient care
  - professionalism
  - physicians' own care and safety
  - viability of health-care systems
Early signs

- Illness: frequent colds, headaches, fatigue
- Reduced tolerance to pain or patient contact
- Lowered resilience, moodiness
- Sleep disturbance
- Escape fantasies
- Taking work home
- Self-esteem tied to patient outcomes
- Less empathy
- Hopelessness, pessimism, dread
- Detachment from patients perceived as draining
- Disregard for professional boundaries or ethics
- Job dissatisfaction and reduced performance
Contributing factors

- Healthcare reform
- Inadequate reimbursement
- Patient volume
- Insufficient time with patients
- Electronic medical records
- Time spent on administrative tasks
- Ineffective technology
- Stress of higher status
- Perfectionism and ambition
Ways to practice self-care

- Relax and recharge
  - Solitude or social support
  - Regular exercise, good nutrition, adequate opportunity to sleep
- Create a life outside your work
  - Hobbies, friendships, loved ones, creativity, spirituality
- Boundaries
  - Work reasonable hours
  - Be present at both work and play
- Consult
- Therapy
  - Increase self-understanding and development, relieve stress
Mindful Self-Compassion

- A growing body of evidence suggests that even brief mindfulness and self-compassion-based skills training can significantly reduce burnout rates.
Exercise

Self-Compassion in Daily Life
Self-Compassion in Daily Life

**Physically** – soften the body

How do you care for yourself physically (e.g., exercise, massage, warm bath, cup of tea)?

Can you think of new ways to release the tension and stress that builds up in your body?

**Mentally** – reduce agitation

How do you care for your mind, especially when you are under stress (e.g., meditation, watch a funny movie, read an inspiring book)?

Is there a new strategy you’d like to try to let your thoughts come and go more easily?

**Emotionally** – soothe and comfort yourself

How do you care for yourself emotionally (pet the dog, journal, cook)?

Is there something new you’d like to try?
Emotionally – soothe and comfort yourself

How do you care for yourself emotionally (pet the dog, journal, cook)?

Is there something new you’d like to try?

Relationally – connect with others

How or when do you relate to others that brings you genuine happiness (e.g., meet with friends, send a birthday card, play a game)?

Is there any way that you’d like to enrich these connections?

Spiritually – commit to your values

What do you do to care for yourself spiritually (pray, walk in the woods, help others)?

If you’ve been neglecting your spiritual side, is there anything you like to remember to do?

From The Mindful Self-Compassion Program
Discussion & Questions
References