

Physician Wellbeing

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Disclosures

- I have no disclosures.

Objectives

- 1. We will examine the factors within individuals which affect physician wellbeing.
- 2. We will become familiar with individual strategies that maximize physician mental health and fulfillment.
- 3. We will review organizational change steps to improving physician wellbeing.



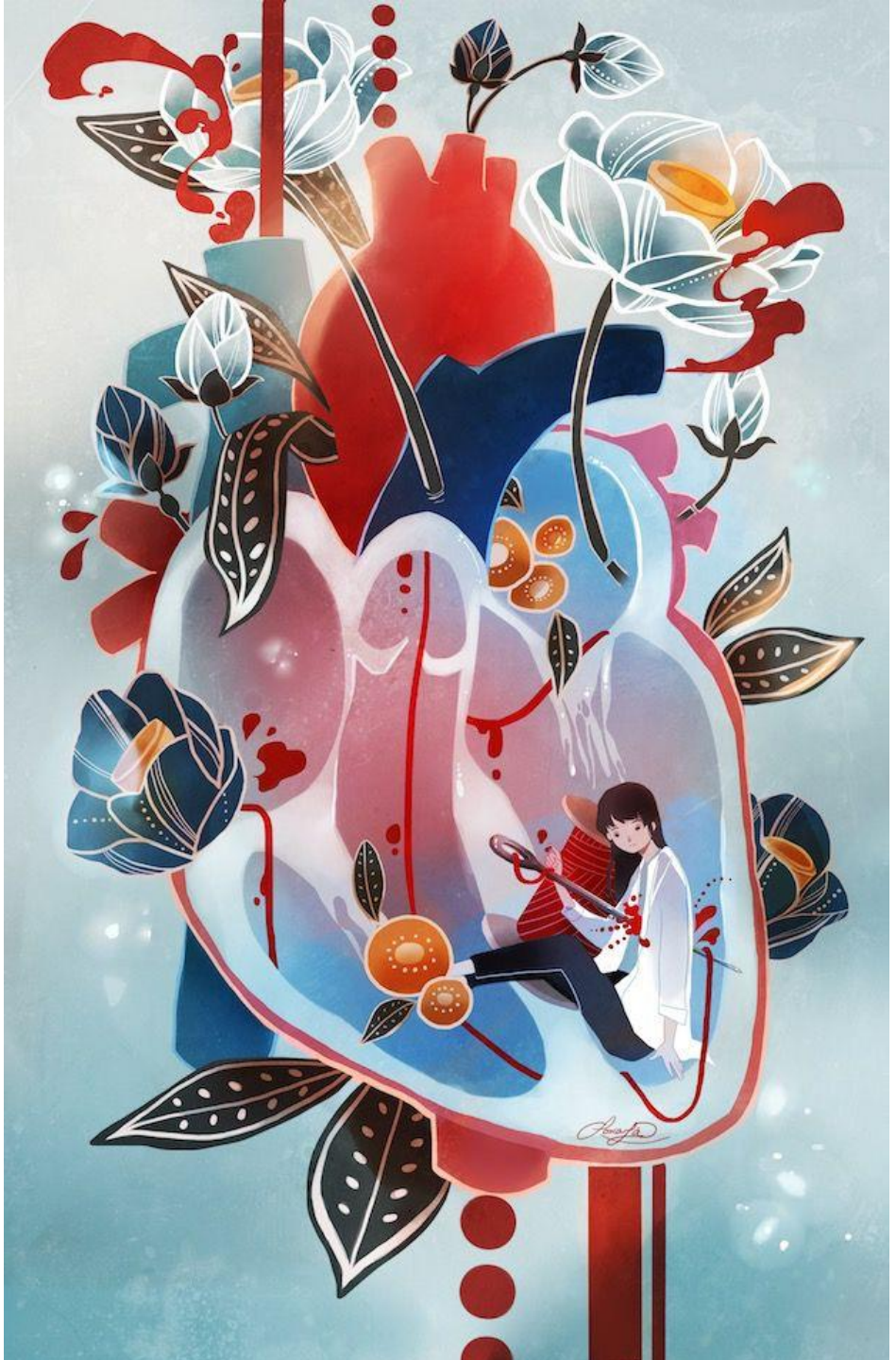
NATIONAL ACADEMY of MEDICINE



National Academy of Medicine

Action Collaborative on
Clinician Well-Being and Resilience

Expressions of Clinician Well-being

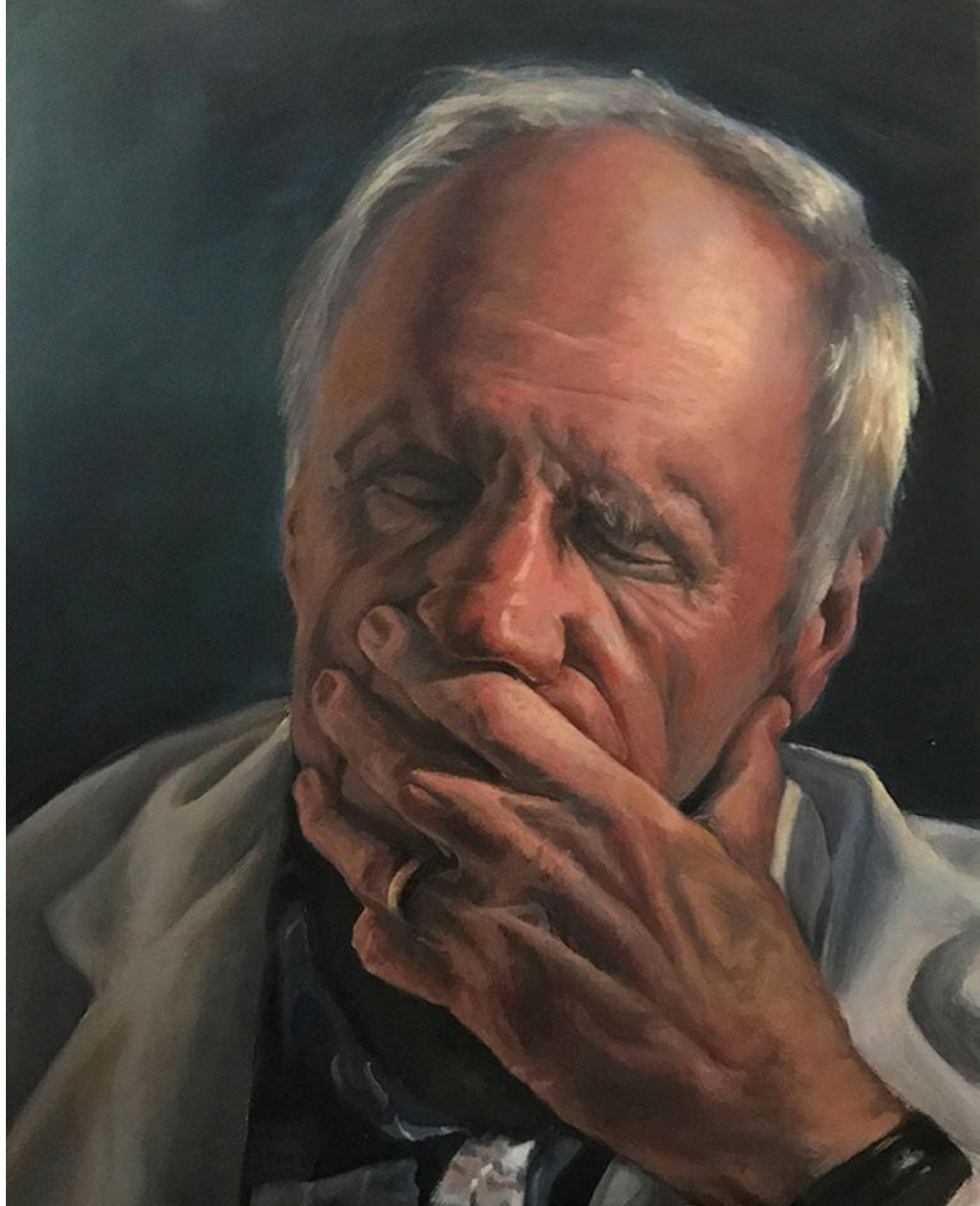


The Red Thread

Sonia Lai, *Fremont, CA*



“I drew this piece as a representation of my experience with health care worker burnout. My work and passion lies in helping the underserved populations. Although professionalism mandates a certain type of distance between myself and patients, there are inevitable instances where I draw from emotional reserves. Sometimes I take my work home and cry because I know a patient received the right prescription for his/her condition but can't even afford to eat consistently. Sometimes I can't sleep because I know another patient's health won't improve until they stop working 14 hours a day, but that individual is already living paycheck-to-paycheck with five children to care for.”

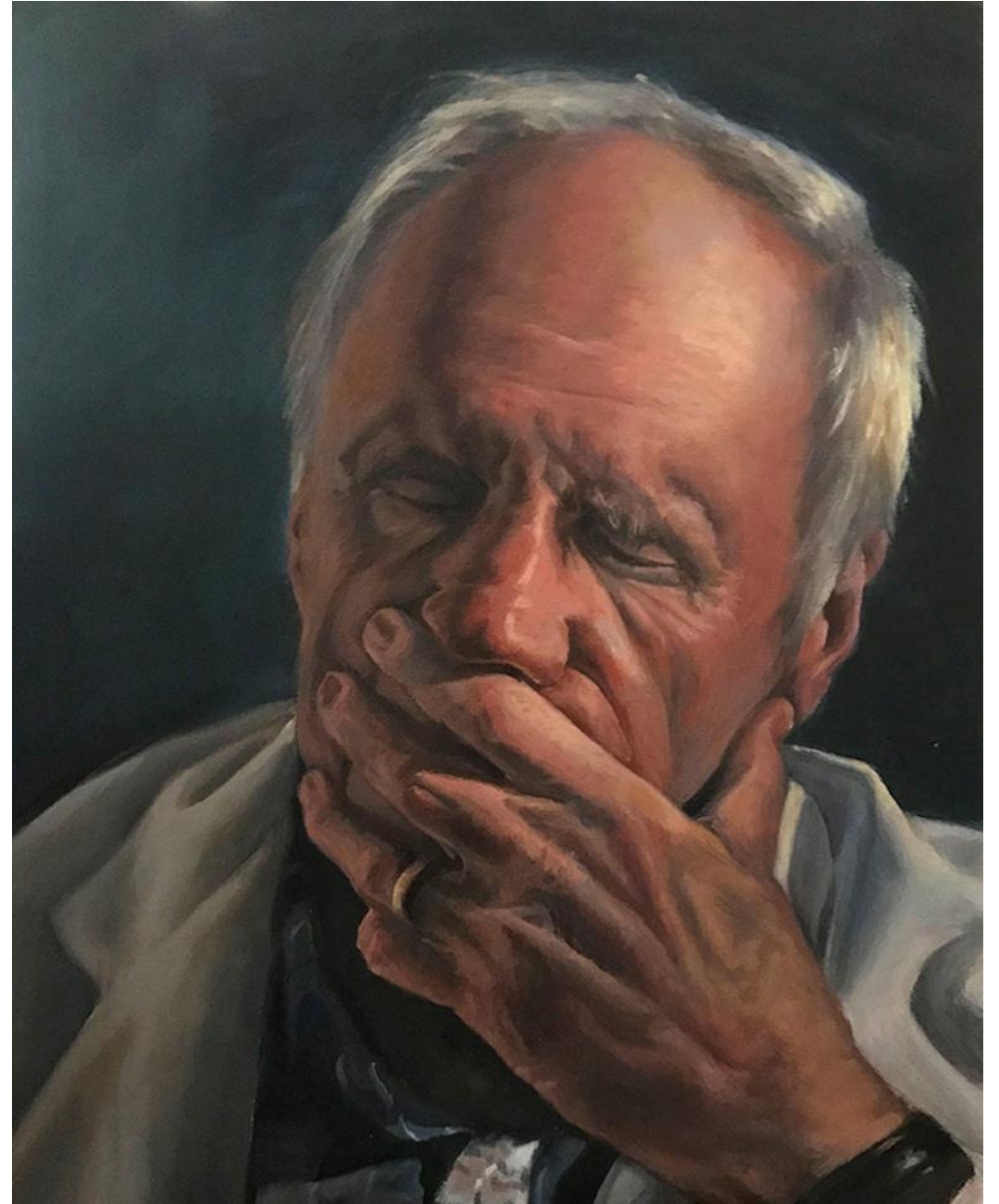


Tough Decision

Edi Matsumoto

Carmel, CA

“Health care providers are often forced to make tough decisions that involve their patients, insurance companies, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies, the hospital, or clinic administrators, among others. Oftentimes, there is no one clear answer as to what the best decision is. The decision-making process can be challenging and anxiety-provoking, especially when a patient's well-being is at stake. They are often faced with a moral dilemma and have to balance the possible benefits and risks that may result from their decisions.”







Resilience

Cheyenne Silver

Forest Park, Illinois

“When I told people I was pursuing medicine, I had the statistics of female physician suicide rates mentioned. When I got to medical school, I was told to choose a specialty that would easily pay the bills and have me home by five. When I professed an interest in surgery, I was told to choose for lifestyle, because as a woman I would need a career that would allow me to raise my children in the future. All around me I have been inundated with negativity and doubt, chiefly from senior physicians, whispering to my generation to turn away while we still can. This painting represents how I see these fellow physicians. They feel smothered and trapped behind the hands of outside influence—hands of patient reviews, of fellow colleagues' exhaustion, of society's expectations, of administration shortening patient encounters. In the middle is the eye of the student, where I sit today. We are watching, observing, and being taught beneath the weight of this burned out profession. We are keenly looking out for an answer on how to fix this crisis, to lower our rates of suicide, to support our patients and be home for dinner. This painting depicts the look of anguished hope on the student's face for a future where we can have it all, and not fall into the quagmire of disappointment so many of our mentors struggle beneath.”



Physician Burnout
Michael Sauer
Salt Lake City, Utah

“Multiple cross-sectional studies agree that roughly 1 in 2 physicians report at least one symptom of burnout. Burnout is manifest through a sense of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of low personal accomplishment. Environmental factors within the health care system such as excessive ‘red tape,’ demanding schedules, and lack of physician autonomy are likely major contributing factors to this epidemic.”

<https://nam.edu/expressclinicianwellbeing/#/artwork/276>







Emotions

Douna MontazerAlghaem
Brooklyn, New York

“This piece, titled "Emotions", is an oil painting that demonstrates the unique yet overwhelming impact of exposure to traumatic experiences among physicians. Limitations to openly discuss these experiences and the stigma surrounding such rich, yet heavy feelings are also demonstrated in the artwork.”





Hearts in Medicine
The residents, fellows and faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix Graduate Medical Education Programs coordinated by Dr. Cheryl O'Malley and photographed by Dr. Robert Koch

We keep our hearts in medicine by being mindful of our needs, breaking down barriers and increasing awareness, nurturing our passions, and staying connected with our purpose. When our hearts are in medicine, it feels like "interacting with great people," "helping patient's healing," "being in a position to show kindness," "healing," and being aware that "we all need help sometimes."

Introduction to Well Being

Well Being

Is comprehensive

Includes:

- **Physical health**
- Spiritual health
- Social health
- Financial health
- **Work/life balance**
- Emotional health

These things do not all have to be perfect at any one time and often they aren't in balance.



Why does well being
matter?

Burnout

What is it?

- A condition that results from the chronic inability to emotionally recover from the distress of work and downtime.
- This is an emotional condition that occurs when we don't take the time to recover from distress.
- Distress = Emotional challenges

What does it look like?

- Physical and mental exhaustion
- Doubts about competence and value of work
- Loss of belief in yourself and your work

Physician well being

We all have burnout stories and recovery is hard.

How we recover is important.

Being a physician is challenging and takes an emotional toll.

When emotional reserves are spent this leads to burnout.

Being a physician includes severe stress and high ideals. This combination leads to burnout.

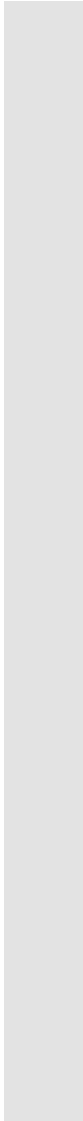

Human Connection

We put on a face but often don't share our struggles.

All of us struggle or will struggle.

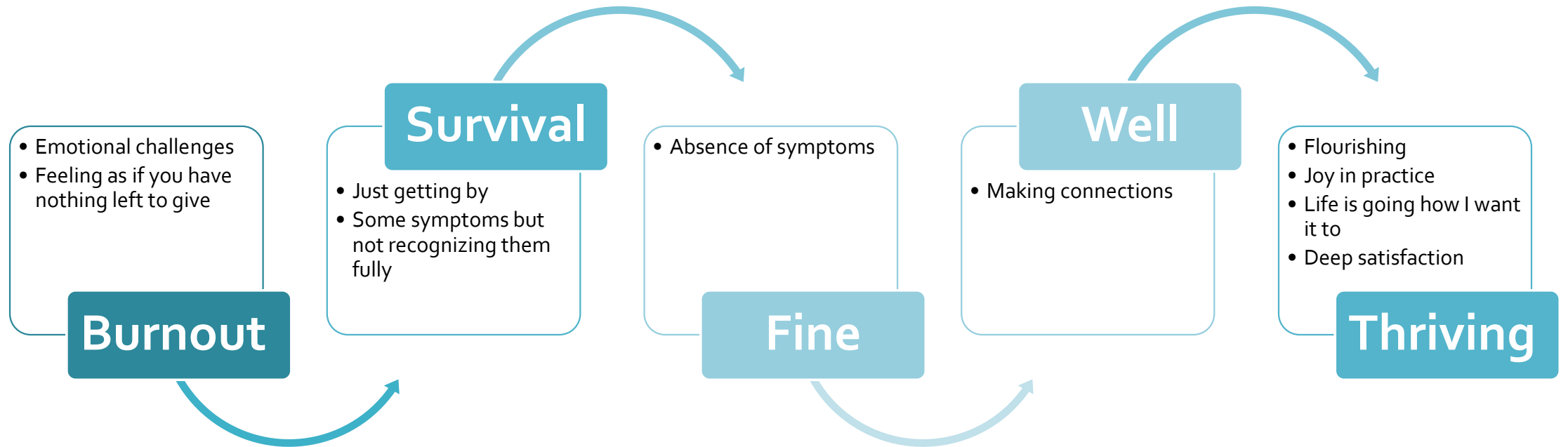
Our relationship with people is central to what we do.

Medicine is emotional but we are taught to compartmentalize in order to survive. This is both necessary and detrimental.



Evaluating your own well being

Spectrum of Well Being



Barriers to well being



Feel as if you are breaking the "code of silence."



How you are building your team.



How you are connecting relationally.

Well being

- The first thing to remember about wellness is our own health matters most.
- Answer this question:
 - My own health is critical to my effectiveness as a _____.

Step 1: Recognizing symptoms of burnout

Emotional exhaustion

Cynicism, de-personalization

Considering patients/family members
impediments or objects

Inefficiency

Meaninglessness in your work

What contributes to burnout?

- One item which is common amongst physicians is perfection.
- Perfection is an adaptive mechanism to avoid pain, shame and rejection.
- What does this look like?
 - Unfinished charts piling up
 - Adding on patients/cases despite a full schedule
 - Hypertrophied guilt over adverse outcomes
 - Procrastination
 - Compare and despair
 - Parent guilt
 - Constant self-improvement
- These increase stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and imposter syndrome.



Burnout is NOT a
personal failure.

Step 2:
Strategies for
improvement

Phase 1: Self-awareness

Phase 2: Self-care

Phase 3: Self-improvement

These can be applied at the level of the individual, team, or system.

Phase 1: Self-awareness



Mindfulness



Stop multi-tasking



Self-reflection



Purposeful exercise



Resilience – the ability to take a challenge and turn it into an opportunity



Narrative writing – process your experiences, journaling

Mindfulness – another meaning

- Examine your brain's narrative.
 - How are you thinking about your upcoming day?
- Remember thoughts drive behavior.
 - Perfectionist thoughts drive our feelings that create our actions and our outcomes.
- Change the narrative.
 - Change your thinking.
 - Positive thoughts = Positive outcomes

Writing

- Narrative writing: focuses on patient, patient needs and feelings
- Expressive writing: writing about yourself
 - Write about moral injury
 - Physician memoir = Physician perspective
- Writing increases compassion for yourself and for others. This helps establish community.

Phase 2: Self-care



Eating well – Balanced nutrition



Exercise - Activity



Sleep



Social relationships – Time to play



Time management – how we choose to use our time. Time log activity – what matters to you and how much time do you devote to these activities.

Tools

- Create connection
 - Lunchtime walks
 - Social gatherings
 - Book club discussing what it means to be a physician, humanistic aspects
- Distress Kit
 - Psychological "kit" which includes your soothing strategies, stress scale, psychological contact list and tools for identifying colleague distress.
- One must be deliberate about your own health and wellbeing by creating a wellbeing plan.
- This plan needs to be based on the coping strategies that work for you. (i.e. running, meditation, social connection)
- Make note of the healthy coping strategies that work for you.
- Be aware of your own stress.



One happy thought or smile
increases circulation by 22%



Anger = 230% increase in
MIs in the next 2 hours



Negative emotions =
increased degradation of
telomeres and advancing
the aging process

Phase 3: Self-improvement



Embracing changes



Asking yourself
“What am I feeling
right now?”



Acknowledge the
things that are
good



Celebrating small
things



Practicing
gratitude



Establishing the
habit

Celebration



Practice gratitude



Celebrate small things
which are steps in the
process



Change the culture to
celebrate people taking
care of themselves

How do you find meaning?



Take time to recognize self and others



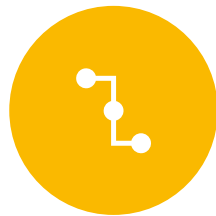
Go back to the meaning one gets in medicine



Understand our purpose in life – write a mission statement



What is our purpose and how are we contributing to that



Look for daily opportunities to find fulfillment/joy/purpose



Practice gratitude

Important Questions and Thoughts

How can we overcome our own thoughts?

You don't have to deny your feelings. You don't have to be perfect or fear failure. Embrace these things in a different way than we've been trained to do.

Acknowledge our vulnerability with students, residents, faculty, and colleagues. Allow your vulnerabilities to show.

Struggles continue throughout your career – acknowledge these struggles.

Allot your time to address the needs you have as an individual.

Self-care is not a weakness.

How do you create a culture of well-being?



Define the competency of wellness. What are the outcomes?



Get data about wellness/burnout. See where you are right now. Include all the staff. This can be done on the individual, team or system level.



Talk about it – burnout and meaning. Reconnect with what is going on around you. What things cause frustration/inefficiencies/hassles? How do you address these? Come up with solutions and follow through.



Counterbalance hassles with uplifts. Research shows this needs to be a 1:5 ratio. Create systems that acknowledge the good things going on to keep this at a healthy ratio.

Resilience

What is it?

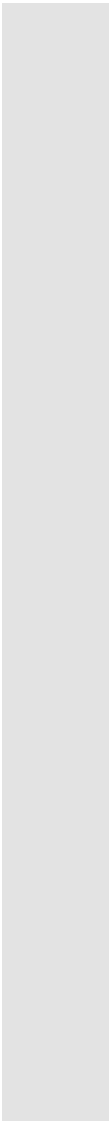
- The ability to bounce back between stressors.

Resilience is based on both mind/brain health and physical health.

Life + Adversity = Strength (Resilience)



Barriers to Resilience

- Stigma
 - Misconceptions
 - Pressure
 - Professionalism
 - Perfectionism
 - Logistics
 - Finances
 - Uncertainty
 - Making the transition from your family of origin to your family of choice
 - Balancing caring for yourself as the healthcare professional and understanding the financial aspects of medicine
- 

Ways to Build Resilience

Acknowledge your humanity. Be compassionate both to yourself and others.

Learn to relax. Acquiring of self-care skills will provide ways to cope with challenges in life and work.

Hone your ability to process stressors. Learn to respond to stress instead of reacting to stress. Take time to reflect and relax, and then determine how to build from there.

Practice awareness of your thoughts. Focus on positive thinking. Listen to what you are saying or thinking when something goes wrong.

Ways to Build Resilience

Change your outlook about negative situations and bad events. The ability to reframe frustrations can provide a more positive outlook.

Learn from your mistakes. Every mistake has the power to teach you something. Look for this lesson in every situation. Let yourself process the initial emotions, but don't stay in the negative headspace too long.

Choose how you respond to negative situations. You can choose to react with panic and negativity, or you can remain calm and logical to find a solution.

Ways to Build Resilience

Maintain perspective. Situations can seem overwhelming in the moment, but they may not make much impact over time.

Build self-confidence. When you develop a strong sense of self, you have the strength to move forward.

Develop strong relationships. Those with strong connections at work are more resistant to stress and happier in their role. This gives you a strong support network to fall back on.

Ways to Build Resilience

Be flexible. Things change and even carefully made plans need to be amended or scrapped all together.

Acknowledge the team for their sacrifice.

Listen to others who are struggling and show compassion and understanding. This strengthens the relationship and the team.

Resources

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