Using Evidence to Promote Physician Wellness and Reduce Burnout

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Planning & Training

• Visas, health screening
• Planning to be away
• US-based non-governmental organization
  – Ebola
  – Protocols
  – Self-care
In-Country Realities

• Restricted travel
• Fear
• Collapsed infrastructure
• Warm & grateful patients
• International presence
• Inspiring colleagues
Before the Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU)

- How to dress
- Finding a buddy
- Finding PPE
- Eating, hydrating
- Donning
- Checking your buddy
In the ETU

- Team
- Patients
- Patient care
- Protocols
- Safety
  - Team
  - Personal
After the ETU

- Doffing
- Hydrating
- Eating
- Documenting
- Communicating
- Recovery
Lessons from Sierra Leone

• Ebola work is characterized by:
  – Long hours
  – Difficult conditions
  – Physically and emotionally taxing
  – Protocols
  – Narrow margin of error
  – Depending on your team
  – Possible social isolation
  – Little control
Lessons from Sierra Leone

• Being an Ebola responder was made easier by:
  – Meaningful work
  – Shared sense of purpose
  – Connections with others
  – Teamwork
  – Control over your day
  – Reducing chaos
  – Social support
  – Taking care of colleagues
  – Self care
Sound familiar?
Lessons from Sierra Leone

- Ebola work **Medicine** is characterized by:
  - Long hours
  - Difficult conditions
  - Physical tolls
  - Emotional tolls
  - Protocols
  - Narrow margin of error
  - Depending on your team
  - Possible social isolation
  - Little control
Lessons from Sierra Leone

Ebola work **Medicine** is made easier by:

– Meaningful work
– Shared sense of purpose
– Connections with patients
– Teamwork
– Control over your work load
– Reducing disorganization
– Social support
– Taking care of your colleagues
– Self care*
We should agree that there is a **moral imperative** to supporting wellness.
How do we support wellness?

• **Promote strategies to support wellness and reduce burnout**

• **Personal strategies:**
  – Eat, drink
  – Sleep
  – Exercise
  – Reflect
  – Nurture resilience

How do we nurture resilience?

• *Know our values*
• *Maintain connections*
• *Practice mindfulness*
• *Exercise gratitude*
• *Avoid over-efficiency*
For the Young Doctor About to Burn Out

Professional burnout is the sum total of hundreds and thousands of tiny betrayals of purpose, each one so minute that it hardly attracts notice.

Richard Gunderman, MD
The Atlantic
What can be done?

• Satisfaction and sustainability are predicted by:
  • Time pressure
  • Work control
  • Workplace chaos
  • Organizational culture

Credit to M Linzer & S Poplau.
West et al. Lancet 2016;388:2272–2281
Organizational approaches to physician wellness

- Resiliency training
- Peer support
- Healthy foods
- Improve the physical environment


Organizational approaches to physician wellness

- **Workplace wellness programs**
- **Engaging leaders who are committed to wellness**
- **Protecting us from unnecessary challenges**

*A Call to Action: Creating a Culture of Health*
January 2011

American Hospital Association
Protection from unnecessary challenges

- **Reduce time pressure, allow more control**
  - Realistic workloads
  - Redistribute work
  - Avoid “it’s just 3 more clicks”

Credit to M Linzer & S Poplau.
Improve our days

- More organization, less chaos
- Support team work and care coordination
- Pilot unique schedules

Credit to M Linzer & S Poplau.
LeMaire J. BMC HSR. 2010; 10:208
Promote shared values

– *Tie the work we do to our values*
– *Leaders value well-being*
– *Provide resources for a wellness, satisfaction, and sustainability committee*
– *Benchmark physician satisfaction and well-being*
– *Reward and recognize*

*Credit to M Linzer & S Poplau.*
Improve patient satisfaction, quality outcomes and provider recruitment and retention.

Preventing physician burnout

AMA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH Hennepin County Medical Center ACP

CME CREDITS: 0.5 INFORMATION ABOUT CME COMPLETED

How will this module help me successfully eliminate burnout and adopt wellness approaches in my practice?

1. Seven key steps to help you prevent provider burnout
2. Ten-item survey designed to assist you in assessing burnout
3. Examples of successful burnout prevention programs in a variety of practice/organization settings

Download module as PDF
Making your case for change

• Quality of care can suffer
• Patient safety can suffer
• Patient satisfaction can suffer
• Unhappy, exhausted physicians leave
• Recruitment suffers

Making your case for change

- It’s expensive to replace a physician
- Dedicated time for passion projects are cost-effective
- Our organizations can model health for our communities
- Basic human decency

Credit to M Linzer & S Poplau.
Togeda we dae fët Ebola fo komot na Salon
We should agree that there is a **moral imperative** to supporting wellness.

We must address physician burnout as systematically as we’ve addressed other public health crises.

Credit: M Linzer, S Poplau