

ASPHO Workshop
Burnout in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology: Moving from Discussion to Action

Group 1: Strategies: Proactive and Reactive

Definitions

Resilience

Resilience is the strength of body, mind, and character that enables people to respond well to adversity.

Cumulative stress/burnout

A state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

Compassion fatigue

The emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events

Acute stress reactions/critical incidents

An unusually challenging event that has the potential to create significant human distress and can overwhelm or interfere with one's usual coping mechanisms

Self-Assessment Questions

1. I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout.
2. Occasionally I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out.
3. I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion.
4. The symptoms of burnout that I'm experiencing won't go away. I think about frustration at work a lot.
5. I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help.

This item often is dichotomized as ≤ 2 (no symptoms of burnout) vs. ≥ 3 (1 or more symptoms)

Underlying Factors

Psychological Strengths and Vulnerabilities

Characteristics of Great Clinicians	Vulnerabilities
Thoroughness	Over-compulsiveness
Commitment	Over commitment
Perfectionism	Inability to make mistakes
Healthy skepticism	Need for certainty
Altruism, stoicism, hard work	Neglecting self-care and family
Caring	Compassion fatigue
Rationality	Emotional distance
Self-criticism	Self-depreciation

External Resources and Demands

1. Workload
2. Autonomy and control over practice
3. Quality of work environment
4. Shared governance
5. EMR

Knowing Your Warning Signs

1. Irritable
2. Distracted
3. Mindless eating, drinking
4. Disconnected
5. Depression
6. Anxiety
7. Substance Use
8. Sleep disturbance

Proactive Strategies

Are there any of these strategies that you are current using that you find beneficial?

1. Self-Reflection
 - a. What did I learn today?
 - b. Would I do anything differently?
 - c. What three things am I grateful for today?
 - d. What inspired me?
 - e. How did I talk to myself today?
 - f. Did I take myself too seriously?
 - g. Did anything surprise me?
2. Contact Colleagues
 - a. "What are you observing about my stress level these days?"
 - b. Community and relationships
 - c. Sharing clinical concerns

3. Finding Healthy Boundaries
4. Cognitive strategies
 - a. Tracking activation during the day
 - b. Reframing cognitive distortions
 - c. Notice when catastrophizing
5. Staying Connected to Mission
6. Rebuilding local culture
7. Honoring Strengths and Successes
8. Mindfulness Practices
9. Meaning and purpose
10. Fitness and sleep
11. Gratitude Practices

Reactive Strategies

Acute stress:

1. Individual peer support
2. Group peer support (critical incident stress management)
3. Coping strategies

Burnout

1. Seek professional counseling
2. Find a mentor
3. Enlist your peers for support
4. Reconnect to your mission
 - a. Clarify what is most important in personal and professional life
 - b. Write your personal mission
 - c. Consider your legacy
5. Identify what energizes and what drains you
6. Find meaning outside work
7. Faith based practices
8. Learn something new
9. Volunteer
10. Connect to your physical self
11. Have fun

**Are there other strategies not on this list that you find beneficial?
What is one take away strategy from today?**

Margaret Rea, Ph.D., 916 703-WELL (9355), mrea@ucdavis.edu
Patricia L. Tritt, RN, MA, 303 503-4285, Patricia.Tritt@comcast.net

Additional Strategies Critical Incident Stress Reactions

Over the next month you may experience common reactions to the kind of experience you have had which may include:

Physical Reactions	Cognitive Reactions	Emotional Reactions	Behavioral Reactions	Spiritual Reactions
Fatigue/exhaustion Insomnia Sleep disturbances Over/Under activity Nightmares Change in appetite Digestive problems Physical problems Headaches Nausea	Lack of concentration Flashbacks Difficulty with decisions Memory disturbance Amnesia Confusion Poor problem solving Disturbed thinking Poor abstract thinking Change in alertness	Fear Guilt Emotional numbing Over sensitivity Anxiety Depression Feeling helpless Anger Irritability Frustration	Change in activity Change in communication Withdrawal Suspiciousness Hyper-alertness Startle reflex Change in sexual behavior Emotional outbursts Scapegoating Pacing	Anger at their God/Creator/Buddha Blaming Spiritual Entity for the crisis or loss Loss of religious or spiritual faith Turning to a faith for answers or support Change in sense of self/inner power Loss of self/self efficacy/own abilities

These reactions are common and, although painful, are part of the normal healing process. There is not a lot anyone can do to make you not experience these uncomfortable feelings but there are some things you can do to feel more whole.

Things to try:

- ◆ Within the first 24 - 48 hours, periods of strenuous physical exercise alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of your physical reactions.
- ◆ Structure your time - keep busy.
- ◆ You're having common reactions - don't label yourself as crazy.
- ◆ Talk to people - talk is the most healing medicine.
- ◆ Beware of numbing the pain with drugs or alcohol. You don't need to complicate this with a substance abuse problem.
- ◆ Reach out - people do care.
- ◆ Keep your lives as normal as possible.
- ◆ Spend time with others.
- ◆ Help those around you as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- ◆ Give yourself permission to feel rotten.
- ◆ Keep a journal - write your way through those sleepless hours.
- ◆ Do things that feel good to you.
- ◆ Realize that those around you are under stress.
- ◆ Accept offered help.
- ◆ Eat nutritious, well-balanced meals high in carbohydrates and low in sugar.
- ◆ Avoid excessive use of caffeine.
- ◆ Don't make any big life changes.

Coping With Stress

Special Tips for Helping Professionals

1. Plan for trauma – expect stress in this field.
2. Be clear on beliefs and values – these change over the years and it's important to stay in touch with yourself.
3. Create meaning in your life – make sure your life is congruent with your personal beliefs and values.
4. Cultivate a well chosen support system – educate them to your needs in times of stress. Choose some givers instead of takers.
5. Manage your time – learn time management techniques, keep things organized.
6. Diversify activities; cultivate routines – a large number of diverse activities can help you relax. Maintaining routines and rituals is important.
7. Choose your battles – conserve your energy for those situations that require it. Don't use your energy fighting battles you have no chance of winning.
8. Gather information – the more information you have, the better you can cope with stress.
9. Individual mastery – do things at which you can be successful.
10. Integrate the stressor – how does it fit in your life, what does it mean in your life.
11. Talk about the meaning of life – engaging in deep philosophical discussion helps us stay in touch with the inner self.
12. Talk about the meaning of death – staying in touch with what you believe about death helps you integrate death into life.
13. Nurture your spirituality – whatever your beliefs, sometimes all you have to draw on is your inner reserves.
14. Remind yourself that this career is a choice – if it gets too bad, you have the choice to quit, or change roles or positions.

Ways to Reduce Stress

1. Physical exercise – develop an exercise routine that is aerobic and fun. Stick to it more religiously when under high stress. This does more to reduce acute stress than anything else you can do.
2. Eat regular, nutritional meals – foods low in fat, sodium and simple sugar and high in carbohydrates are the best. Eat as though you are in training. Mealtime should be as stress-free as possible.
3. Supplement your diet with vitamins and minerals – your body uses up its B vitamins, C vitamins and calcium during stress. If your diet does not provide sufficient amounts of these, take supplements.
4. Post notes to yourself – the memory is affected by stress so write reminders to yourself. When making appointments, write where they are and directions to them in your appointment book.
5. Prepare for morning the night before – put things you need to take with you by the door. Decide what you're going to wear and be sure it's ready.
6. Get up 15 minutes early – this gives you time for unforeseen things.
7. Anticipate your needs – stop for gas before you really need it. Keep cash and coins on hand.
8. Allow extra time to get where you need to go – this way, if there are traffic delays you will not increase your stress.
9. Walk everywhere you can – it's good exercise and it gives you the opportunity to smell the flowers.
10. Schedule quiet times – especially helpful is quiet just before bed and first thing in the morning. In addition, some quiet time during the day may be helpful.
11. Keep your sense of humor – seeing the humor in a situation will help keep your stress low.
12. Relax your standards – you don't have to do anything perfectly.
13. Find a serene place of your own – even if it's just a comfortable chair in a corner.
14. Change your perspective – ask yourself what this all matters in the march of the universe
15. Take advantage of your body rhythms – schedule your most difficult tasks for your peak hours and less difficult tasks for other times.
16. Have fun – we can't be serious all of the time.
17. Say "no" more often – you need to pick the activities on which you want to spend your life energy.
18. Reward yourself after stressful activities – relax with a book, listen to music, have a special lunch, or take a long, leisurely bath.
19. Spend time with others – preferably with others not involved in your work.
20. Keep a journal – writing down inner thoughts is a way of release, as well as providing a journal for later contemplation.
21. Get plenty of rest – schedule extra sleep time during times of stress. When you can't sleep, get up and do something non-simulating.
22. Don't make big life changes – stressful times are not the time to change everything.
23. Keep schedules as normal as possible – the semblance of routine helps.
24. Don't give yourself negative labels – you are not "losing it," you are reacting to stress in a normal way.