The Importance of Self-Care for Those who Care (about others)

Presentation to Vanderbilt’s Core Exchange

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Disclosure

• I currently serve on the following Boards:
  – Board of Directors of the Association of American Medical Colleges.
  – Board of the Accreditation Council for Nutrition Professional Education.
  – Academic Advisory Board of ScholarRX.

• I am the founder of Innovative Consultants in Education, LLC, and have been a visiting professor or consultant at over 100 medical schools worldwide.

• I have no financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose and no conflicts of interest to resolve.
Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the key drivers of chronic stress and burnout that impact health professionals, staff and students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Outline the physiology of the stress response and describe how chronic stressors can lead to impairment.

- Describe a number of strategies to reduce stress and boost resilience and how engaging in self-care, as a team, can change the culture and improve the work environment.
Self-care Needs
(for students, faculty, staff, and even deans)

• **Physiological self-care for the Body**
  – reducing the effects of chronic stress on functions of the body

• **Psychological self-care for the Mind**
  – reducing the impact of chronic stress on our psyche/emotions

• **Spiritual self-care for the Soul**
  – finding meaning in our lives, and in the work that we do
mind-body-spirit self care
Question to Vanderbilt’s Core Exchange Leaders

How are you doing?
Not Great!!

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a major disruptive impact on the research enterprise
Back before the COVID-19 Pandemic...
1 in every 2 physicians experiences burnout

And not just physicians…

All healthcare professionals exhibit high rates of burnout

Burnout is a response to chronic stressors that wear on a person over time—not acute ones such as a big event or a big change.

Christina Maslach, PhD

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Negative Self-Evaluation
Job Related Symptoms of Burnout

- Fatigue, energy depletion
- Difficulty focusing, completing tasks
- Increasingly lack patience with co-workers, clients
- Physical symptoms (headache, stomach ache, nausea)
- Feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
- Disinterest at work spreads to other aspects of life
- Dread going to work
Key Drivers of Burnout in Nurses

- Chronic nursing shortage
- Long shifts
- Putting others first
- Busy, high-stress environments
- Dealing with sickness and death

Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being

Report Release | October 23, 2019
And then the Pandemic hit...
COVID-19 Pandemic Created Enormous Stress on Students, Faculty and Staff

**Students**
- Move to a virtual educational and clinical environment
- Uncertainty regarding gaining sufficient clinical training
- Safety concerns
- Isolation from family and peers

**Faculty and Staff**
- Safety issues for clinicians
- Challenges with teaching in a virtual environment
- Disrupted research programs
- Challenges working from home (especially those with children and elderly parents)
What Did We Do?
at Georgetown University Medical Center

• All-Staff Town Hall meetings: offered support and guidance

• Emphasized the importance of self-care (not a luxury, but a necessity to insure faculty, staff and students were healthy)

• Shared a number of strategies to address current challenges in mental health and physical well-being and provided tips to boost resilience
4 Strategies to Manage Stress
Strategies to Manage Stress

• Getting the right amount and quality of sleep
Why it's important to get a good night's sleep during the coronavirus outbreak

April 16, 2020

Written By Lisa Modalle, PsyD, DBSM

Set a sleep schedule and follow a routine. “Having a daily, fixed wake up time is the most important part of the schedule,” says Dr. Guralnick.

Wind down before bed without technology. In the hours leading up to bedtime, try to avoid viewing any technology with a backlight, like a phone, a tablet or a computer. Your brain thinks that the light coming from those is daylight and it will suppress the release of a hormone called melatonin which helps you to sleep.

Consider keeping a “worry journal.” “If you suffer from stress or anxiety consider keeping a worry journal where you can write down your daily concerns,” and then set it aside before bedtime.

Keep the bed only for sleep and intimacy. “The bed is not for eating or working or reading or pretty much anything else,” says Dr. Guralnick.

If you can’t fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up. “Do something boring, “like a Sudoku, or light reading with a low light. Go back to bed only when you are sleepy, not just bored.”

Avoid napping. Napping “eats up your 24-hour sleep requirement. If you have to nap, do it early in the day and for no more than 20 minutes.”

Exercise. “Try and stay physically active. It will help your body feel tired and help you fall asleep.”

Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Both can make it difficult to fall asleep. “Even chocolate and orange soda have caffeine,” says Dr. Guralnick. “And alcohol can also ‘fragment’ sleep, so try to avoid drinking alcohol before bedtime.”
Strategies to Manage Stress

• Getting the right amount and quality of sleep
• More opportunities to eat nutritious and balanced meals
The impact of nutrition on COVID-19 susceptibility and long-term consequences

Michael J. Butler⁎, Ruth M. Barrientos⁎,⁎,⁎,⁎,⁎

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PERSPECTIVE


Farah Naja⁎, Rena Hamadeh⁎

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COVID-19, a disease caused by a novel coronavirus, became a major global human threat that has turned into a pandemic. Coronavirus is one of the major pathogens that

In order to enhance the physical and mental health of individuals who have been infected by the COVID-19 pandemic, nutrition presents a framework for action to mai

COVID-19 and Nutrition: The Need for Initiatives to Promote Healthy Eating and Prevent Obesity in Childhood

Karla Danielly da S. Ribeiro, PhD,⁎,⁎ Lígia Rejane Siqueira Garcia, PhD,⁎
Juliana Fernandes dos Santos Dametto, PhD,⁎
Débora Gabriela Fernandes Assunção,⁎ and Bruna Leal Lima Maciel, PhD,⁎,⁎

The COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus brought several individual and collective protection measures to contain the expansion of its transmission, such as social distancing and lockdown. Although extremely necessary, these measures restrict the activities in commerce, restaurants, street markets, and even the closing borders. Thus, for many individuals, usual shopping routines and eating have been entirely upended. As recently discussed by the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), the obesity condition is dangerous to the severity of COVID-19 and has emerged as one of the most prominent risk factors increasing the disease mortality. 1,2 In this sense, nutritional status and diets might influence the individual risk for the progression of SARS-CoV-2, but information on the impact of nutrition on COVID-19 is still arising.
Strategies to Manage Stress

• Getting the right amount and quality of sleep
• More opportunities to eat nutritious and balanced meals
• Physical activity *(avoiding inactivity)*
Increasing steps from 4000/d to 8000/d decreased risk of all cause mortality by 50%.
Among Black and White men and women in middle adulthood, participants who took approximately 7000 steps/d or more, experienced 50%-70% lower mortality rates compared with participants taking fewer than 7000 steps/d.

There was no association of step intensity with mortality.
Strategies to Manage Stress

• Getting the right amount and quality of sleep
• More opportunities to eat nutritious and balanced meals
• Avoiding physical inactivity
• **Adopting stress reduction techniques**
Strategies to Manage Stress for All Professionals

• Getting the right amount and quality of sleep
• Eating nutritious and balanced meals
• Reducing inactivity – increasing physical exercise
• Adopting stress reduction techniques
Resilience

“Resilience is the ability of an individual to respond to stress in a healthy, adaptive way such that personal goals are achieved at minimal psychological and physical cost; resilient individuals not only ‘bounce back’ rapidly after challenges but also grow stronger in the process.”

Epstein and Krasner (Acad Med 2013)

“Resilience is not limited to an elite few... anyone can learn to become more resilient” Steven Southwick, MD
Ten Resilience Factors

1. Optimism
2. Facing Fear
3. Moral Compass
4. Drawing on Faith/Spirituality
5. Social Support
6. Role Models
7. Physical Fitness
8. Brain Fitness
9. Cognitive and Emotional Flexibility
10. Meaning and Purpose
Individual factors of resilience include:

- the capacity for mindfulness,
- self-monitoring,
- setting limits
- attitudes that promote constructive and health engagement with (rather than withdrawal from) the often-difficult challenges at work.
Mayo Clinic Uses SMART Approach to Enhance Caregiver Resiliency

By Diana Mahoney

Realizing the toll that stress can take on the emotional and physical health of its workforce, Mayo Clinic has made it a priority to ensure that its care providers are trained with SMART tools for handling it.

SMART is the acronym for the Stress Management and Resiliency Training program developed by Dr. Amit Sood, professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, director of research and practice at the Mayo Clinic Complementary and Integrative Medicine Program and chair of the Mayo Mind Body Initiative. The structured program, which teaches self-care practices that build resiliency and reduce participants’ emotional and physical vulnerability to daily stress, is mandatory for all Mayo physicians, nurses and medical students enterprise-wide.

AT A GLANCE

- The Stress Management and Resiliency Training (SMART) program developed by Mayo Clinic’s Dr. Amit Sood is mandatory for all physicians, nurses and students across the Mayo Clinic enterprise.
- The 90-minute, mindfulness-based intervention has resulted in statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvements in anxiety, stress, quality of
Definition of Mindfulness

“the awareness that emerges through paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment, to the unfolding of experience from moment to moment”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mind Full or Mindful?
Mindfulness Meditation

- Continually bringing your attention back to whatever is happening in the present moment
- Noticing present moment events with openness and acceptance – without judging or trying to change them
- No right or wrong way to do this
The most commonly studied interventions have involved mindfulness, stress management, and small group discussions, and the results suggest that these strategies can be effective approaches to reduce burnout domain scores.
Conclusion 1

Although the rates of chronic stress and burnout among health care professionals are rising, practicing *mindfulness* can reduce burnout and increase empathy.

*Why and how would mindfulness do that?*
Burnout
Cognitive Reappraisal
Positive Psychology
Reflection
Appreciative Inquiry
Finding Meaning in Work
Mindfulness
Meditation
Resilience
Stress Response

Effect on the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis

“Fight-or-Flight” Response
Physiology of the Stress Response

- Moderate Loss of Resiliency
- Severe Loss of Resiliency
- Optimal Pattern

STRESS HORMONE LEVEL vs TIME

Stressor: Re-Boot
Importance of the return to baseline

- Sustained cortisol impairs feedback regulation: *Implications for coping with novel stressors*

- **Chronic** stress impairs memory, learning

- Differentiate **chronic** stress from **acute** stress

*What can help us get to back to baseline?*
Mind-body Medicine: Practices

- Meditation
- Imagery
- Biofeedback
- Autogenic Training (self-hypnosis)
- Breathing Techniques
- Exercise
- Yoga, Tai Chi
- Group Support
Why is Mindfulness Meditation Effective in Reducing Stress?

- Intentional self-regulation of attention conducted without judgment and focused on observation of the present moment.

- When we are able to focus on just what is happening in the present moment, our minds cannot be anxious, worried or distressed about other issues.
Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

Physiological Benefits

- Decrease in hypertension
- Decrease in heart rate
- Decreased levels of cortisol
- Reduced sympathetic arousal
- Strengthened immune system
- Reduced levels of pain

Physiology of “de-stress”
Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

Psychological Benefits

- Reduced stress level
- Decreased anxiety
- Decreased depression
- Improved confidence and concentration
- Undercuts processes such as worry and rumination
- Increased peace of mind, optimism and self-worth

Psychology of “de-stress”
Mindful practice utilizes our mind-body connection to de-stress ourselves and can bring our stress hormones back to baseline.

But how can we bring these tools to our workplace and our schools?
Mind-Body Medicine Program
at Georgetown U School of Medicine

Objectives

– To increase one’s self-awareness of emotional, physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of their life

– To increase personal self-care through guided experiences and daily mindful practice.

– To foster non-judgmental, supportive collegial relationships
Mind-Body Medicine Program at Georgetown U School of Medicine

• Format of groups:
  – 10 participants and 2 faculty facilitators per group
  – Medical Students (voluntarily sign up for the course) meet once a week for 2 hours for 11 weeks for this “journey of self-discovery”

• Structure of Each Session
  1st hour
  A safe environment must be created that adheres to certain guidelines
  • confidentiality, respect, compassionate listening, non-judgment
  Check-in (sharing of new reflections and insights)
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• Structure of Each Session
  1st hour
  – A safe environment must be created that adheres to certain guidelines
    • confidentiality, respect, compassionate listening, non-judgment
  – Check-in (sharing of new reflections and insights)
  2nd hour
  – Introduction of a new mind-body medicine experience/skill
  – Process the experiential exercise (sharing insights)
Mind-Body Skills Course at Georgetown University SOM

**11-week** course teaches students adaptive stress management skills using mind-body techniques to foster **self-awareness** and **self-care**

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Mind-Body Medicine Program at Georgetown U School of Medicine

**Outcomes**

- Perceived Stress (*Perceived Stress Scale*)
- Mindfulness (*Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory*)
- Empathy (*Interpersonal Reactivity Index*)

Students in Georgetown University School of Medicine's Mind-Body Skills course begin a session with a period of meditation.
FACULTY TRAINING IN MIND-BODY MEDICINE

Educating for Enhanced Self-Awareness and Self-Care

Creating a Culture of Mindfulness

This experiential program provides participants with the training, tools, and strategic thinking necessary to implement Mind-Body Skills groups in their home institutions. During a three-day weekend retreat to Murphin Ridge Inn, participants will be introduced to meditation, guided imagery, biofeedback, breathing techniques, and other mind-body medicine approaches that can alleviate stress and foster self-awareness and self-care. Participants will experience the power of these approaches first-hand while learning how to lead Mind-Body Skills groups for others.

The program includes seven group sessions, several individual activities, and short didactic presentations. Participants are provided with all course materials, enabling them to launch similar programs in their institutions after the retreat.

All health and safety precautions will be followed.

Registration and Application:

INFORMATION

WHEN: NOVEMBER 11-14, 2021
WHERE: MURPHIN RIDGE INN IN WEST UNION, OHIO

WHO SHOULD APPLY: INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN INITIATING MIND-BODY SKILLS GROUPS IN THEIR INSTITUTIONS

TUITION: $3,500 INCLUDES ALL COURSE MATERIALS, THREE NIGHTS LODGING, THREE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS GOURMET MEALS DAILY, AND MORE THAN 100 ACRES OF GARDENS AND TRAILS

CONTACT: SUNIE MCDONALD
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More Medical & Health Professions Schools are Teaching Students Mind-Body Medicine Skills

Georgetown University School of Medicine (medical students, residents, Faculty, Law School)
University of Cincinnati (medicine, allied health, nursing, pharmacy, CCM, DAAP, Law, Arts & Sciences, students, residents, faculty, staff)
University of Alabama at Birmingham (medical students)
University of Louisville School of Medicine (medical students)
University of Florida (medical students, pharmacy, faculty)
Indiana University School of Medicine (medical students)
University of Vermont (medical students)
University of North Dakota Medical School (medical students)
Charite University Medical School, Germany (medical students)
University of Essen-Duisenberg Medical School, Germany (medical students)
University of Friburg, Switzerland (medical students)
University of Lausane, Switzerland (medical students)
University of Utrecht, Netherlands (medical students)
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (medical students)
Stanford University, Anesthesia Residency Program
University of Western States (chiropractic and other CAM professions)
Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (acupuncture and DAOM)
Mid-Sweden University, Sweden (nursing students)
Facilitators’ scores were significantly lower on perceived stress and higher on mindfulness, and were positively correlated.

Qualitative analysis revealed...improvements in communication between colleagues, increased sense of connection with students and colleagues, increased empathy, and heightened self-confidence.
New Insight

When faculty and senior staff serve as facilitators of mind-body groups, they help learners (students and residents) and also help themselves.
Summary of Key Points

• Chronic stress and burnout are serious issues for health professionals, staff and students and are linked to adverse elements in the learning and work environments.

• Mind-Body Medicine reflects the physiologic interface between mind and body and can reverse the stress response.

• Incorporating mindfulness in a group setting can modulate stress, boost resilience and improve the learning/work environments.

• These elements must be actively fostered in our culture and in our learning/work environments.
Take Home Message

Engaging senior staff and faculty to lead curricular innovations (model self-care practices) that improve student/resident and staff well-being helps both participants and facilitators and contributes to a better learning/work environments.
Try a 5 minute Mindfulness Meditation

Resources for Self Care

• **Tips for Boosting Your Resilience in this Time of Crisis** (pdf)
• **5-Minute Meditation Led by Adi Haramati, PhD** (mp4)

https://gumc.georgetown.edu/general-information-and-gumc-updates-related-to-covid-19/

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6 Goals to Reduce Burnout and Foster Professional Well-Being

Goal 1 Create Positive Work Environments
Goal 2 Create Positive Learning Environments
Goal 3 Reduce Administrative Burden
Goal 4 Enable Technology Solutions
Goal 5 Provide support to Clinicians & Learners
Goal 6 Invest in Research