Promoting Resilience in Physicians and Students
Objectives

› Discuss burnout in students and physicians
› Distinguish between well being and resilience
› Discuss and practice methods to promote mindfulness & resilience
› Consider the role of a clinician-educator as a way to build resilience
What is burnout?

› Emotional exhaustion  
  - Emotionally overextended and exhausted by work

› Depersonalization  
  - Negative, cynical attitude, treating patients as objects

› Sense of low personal accomplishment  
  - Feelings of incompetence, inefficiency & inadequacy

› Affects work life and relatively spares personal life  
  - In contrast, depression affects *both* personal and work life
Burnout is common

› 25% - 60% of practicing physicians (several), 54% in 2014

› 76% of internal medicine residents (Shanafelt 2003)

› 45% of 3rd year students (Dyrbye 2006)
Burnout has been measured in training and early career

› Emotional exhaustion less likely in early career
  - EC physicians (39.6%) < residents (44.4%) and medical students (44.6%)

› Depersonalization
  - EC physicians (37.7%) < medical students (37.9%) < residents/fellows (50.7%)

› Personal accomplishment increases with time
  - EC physicians (57%) > residents (48.5%) > medical students (31.3%)

› Depression screen positive in Medical students (58.2%) > residents/fellows (50.8%) > EC physicians (40.0%)

› All measures greater than age-matched controls

Burnout has impact

› Burned out medical students:
  - more likely to engage in unprofessional behavior
  - Have lower empathy scores, less altruistic views

› Burned out residents:
  - Deliver suboptimal care, more likely to commit errors
  - Have impaired concentration, cognition, skills acquisition and application

Burnout increases risk of changing specialty, leaving medicine, alcohol abuse and suicidal ideation
Well being and resilience hold different assumptions

Well being is the state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous

Meriam-Webster

Resilience is the ability to maintain personal and professional well being in the face of ongoing work stress and adversity

The difference between winners and losers is how they handle losing.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business Review

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The Lost Pole
Resilience is hard work: Encountering unexpected and powerful events can be unsettling

There is a “hidden curriculum” during the clinical years that is powerful for three reasons.

- Foreign world; difficult, often overwhelming experiences.
- Rules governing responses to these experiences are unclear.
  - Do beliefs and ideas with which they entered school still apply?
  - Take cues from behaviors they observe.
  - Events rarely discussed; students ascribe detachment and lack of caring to house staff and senior physicians.
- Experiences frequently unacknowledged and unexplored.
When exposed to negative images that evoke disgust and fear (baby with tumor growing out of left eye) fMRI lights up in the amygdala.

More active Pre-frontal cortex inhibits amygdala.

Those with increased Left Pre-Frontal Cortex activity at baseline recover more quickly from negative feelings.

MBSR decreased anxiety, increased left pre-frontal activation.

“Trauma of 3rd Year” and Neuroscience

PTSD

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) tracks brain blood flow, shows that people with PTSD who are reminded of the trauma, tend to have an underactive prefrontal cortex and an overactive amygdala.

Hippocampus (memory) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), part of the prefrontal cortex involved in reasoning and decision-making shrink in PTSD.
What not to do…

When I get to the next phase…

An emphasis on personal solutions
Resilience entails:

› Self Awareness and self monitoring
› Self Regulation and Engaged response to stressors
› Public accountability, Communities of Care, and Health Care institutions

Mindful Communication Program has meaningful outcomes for Physicians

› 8 weeks
  – 2.5 hr weekly seminar
  – one 7 hour retreat focused on mindfulness meditation, narrative writing and appreciative inquiry exercises.

› Intervention group demonstrated improvements in reported mindfulness
  – decreased burnout (all 3 subscales)
  – less mood disturbance
  – increased conscientiousness
  – emotional stability

Krasner et al. JAMA 2009;302:1284-1293
From Mindfulness to Mindful Practice:
It is not about going to the mountain...

Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges by paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment, non judgmentally.

Mindful Practice-moment to moment purposeful attention to one’s own physical and mental process during everyday work with the goal of practicing with clarity and compassion.

The only Zen you can find on the tops of mountains is the Zen you bring up there. Robert M. Pirsig via Jonathan
What We Need is Here

Geese appear high over us, 
Pass, and the sky closes. Abandon, 
As in love or sleep, holds 
Them to their way, clear 
In the ancient faith: what we need 
Is here. And we pray, not 
For new earth or heaven, but to be 
Quiet in heart, and in eye, 
Clear. What we need is here

Wendell Berry
A Reminder as we prepare to work...

› Resilience is a capacity that can be grown
› Well being is about engagement, not withdrawal
› Mindfulness is a community activity
Promoting physician resilience

› Adopt a **positive world view**
  - A positive view of yourself; confidence in strengths/abilities
  - Feeling in control
  - Seeing yourself as resilient (rather than as a victim)

› Look for **meaning beyond oneself**
  - Helping others, finding positive meaning in your life despite difficult or traumatic events

› **Seek Support**
  - Close relationships with family and friends
  - Seeking help and resources in and out of workplace

› **Develop Coping and Self-Care Skills**
  - Coping with stress in healthy ways (exercise, treat depression, vacation) and avoiding harmful coping strategies (substance use)

› **Promote Self-awareness and Self-Management**
  - The ability to manage strong feelings and impulses
  - Good problem-solving and communication skills
  - Mindfulness, meditation, narrative writing

*Source: Shanafelt TD et al. 2003 and 2005, Horowitz 2003*
Positive world view

› Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
  - a change management approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it.
  - Basic tenet of AI is that an organization will grow in whichever direction that people in the organization focus their attention.

› Gratitude exercise
Consistent Gratitude has Outcomes

Forty-five good things: a prospective pilot study of the Three Good Things

- Happiness
- Burnout
- Work-Life Balance
- Depression

Methods: 60 nurses participated in a prospective, single-arm, evidence-based intervention trial. The study included measures of emotional exhaustion, depression symptoms, happiness, burnout, and work-life balance. The intervention was designed to promote gratitude and improve well-being among healthcare professionals.
Mindfulness

› Noticing and Paying Attention-Three Minutes of Red

› The wandering mind
Finding meaning in medicine

Why did you go to medical school?

Tell a story about a recent experience that reminded you why you went into medicine
Support

• Good mentoring, setting limits, administrative support
• Home
  › Develop **healthy relationships**
    - Time with friends and family, supportive partner, support group
  › **Take care of yourself**
    - Exercise, nutrition, treat depression, avoid intoxicants, vacation

• Reflective listening exercise
• Debrief the experience
Stress and stress reduction

› What do you do for this?
› Does it re-charge you?
Reflection & Self-awareness

› Depersonalization
› Catching yourself & noticing
› Buttered toast
Buttered Toast

While I tend to the toaster
My mother has dabbed butter
On all six sides of her sourdough,

I am angered by her manners.
Even before her dementia, she was
The immediate light to my darker passion.
So I get offended at her impropriety
As if manners were a thing that mattered in my family
While I really am angry at my inability
To make her happy, to stop her from losing her
Dignity, in front of strangers on the street, to save her
And when her brow is tense with frustration,
About food, or the plans for the rest of the day,
Or the inability to come up with any
Word at all, she really is afraid of dying
And sadly grieving the things she knew she lost
Though forgot the losing

But the butter moves into the nooks,
And onto the fingers of Miss Alameda County 1960.
And her eyes widen as she says
Oh, this is so good! And I try like the butter
To melt for both of us.

PJ Bonavitacola, UMMS Class of 2014
Burnout Resilience Well being Flourishing
So why resilience in a teaching conference?

Teaching as meaning making

“A burden shared is a burden halved”

David Whyte, The Three Marriages
Mary Oliver has something to say: Throwing you off your game— OR Day to day in Medicine
The journey
One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice--
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones. But little by little, as you left their voices behind, the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds, and there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world, determined to do the only thing you could do--determined to save the only life you could save.

Mary Oliver
Comments, questions, and wrap-up