Promoting Resilience in Physicians and Students
Teachers of Tomorrow
November 2018

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

Nature of the problem
› Global studies, recent study, approach—? Show elevator again
› Solitary solutions
When I get to the next phase…
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

Prevalence

- 25% - 60% of practicing physicians (several), 54% in 2014
- 76% of internal medicine residents (Shanafelt 2003)
- 45% of 3rd year students (Dyrbye 2006)

Burnout 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 (57.7%) > 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

How are we going to deal with this?

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

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
Resilience is dynamic

Resilience is the ability to recover from fumbles or outright mistakes and bounce back. But flexibility alone is not enough. You have to learn from your errors. Those with resilience build on the cornerstones of confidence — accountability (taking responsibility and showing remorse), collaboration (supporting others in reaching a common goal), and initiative (focusing on positive steps and improvements).

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

*Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business Review*

The Lost Pole

Some Components of Resilience

- Confidence (self-efficacy)
- Coordination (planning)
- Control
- Composure (low anxiety)
- Commitment (persistence)

Really selected for in medical students

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Resilience entails

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


AMA charter on physician well being
- NEJM catalyst as combating burnout with personal resilience practices, efficiency of practice, and culture of wellness
- Symbols on prior slide
Professional Identity Formation is our Profession’s responsibility

Resilience is hard work:

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.

Unexpected and Powerful Events can change the brain—a little detour

“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.

MBSR decreased anxiety, increased left pre-frontal activation
Mindfulness Meditation and the Amygdala

- Diminished activity and size in anxiety-related areas:
  - Amygdala
- Diminishes Connections:
  - Functional connections between the amygdala and the PFC are weakened
  - Allows for less reactivity to stressors
- Expert meditators have:
  - Decreases amygdala size and activity
  - Increased size of PFC and insular cortex
  - Emotional regulation

Mindful Communication Program has meaningful outcomes for Physicians

- 8 week, 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 and emotional stability

Krasner et al. JAMA 2009;302:1284-1293

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

From Mindfulness to Mindful Practice:
It is not about going to the mountain…

Mindfulness is 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

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
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 and throwing you off your game— OR Day to day in Medicine
One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their big 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, 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