Collaborative Care: Mindful Engagement with Our Work - Skills to Address Burnout, Resilience and Wellbeing (Workshop)

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Dr. Epstein is a graduate of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts. He is a family physician, teacher, researcher, and writer who has devoted his career to understanding and improving patient-physician communication, quality of care, and clinician resilience. With funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and several major foundations, he has done groundbreaking research on topics including: improving communication in medical settings when patients are facing serious or terminal illness and uncertainty prevails; promoting patient involvement in care; improving communication with patients whose symptoms defy explanation; helping patients understand prognosis in serious illness; and achieving shared mind when faced with difficult decisions. Through innovative programs that promote mindfulness, communication, and self-awareness, he has helped a generation of physicians practice more attentively; develop stronger relationships with patients; approach difficult decisions more mindfully; develop inner strength and resilience to combat burnout; and be more present when their patients need them the most. At the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry, Dr. Epstein co-directs Mindful Practice® programs and the Deans Teaching Fellowship program. He is the recipient of numerous lifetime achievement awards related to communication and humanism; a Fulbright scholarship to the Institute for Health Studies in Barcelona, Spain; and visiting fellowships at the University of Sydney in Australia and the Bröcher Foundation in Geneva, Switzerland. He has published more than 250 articles and book chapters, and his first book, Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity, was released in January of 2017.
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Dr. Marshall earned his medical degree at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, and completed his residency in neurology at the Harvard Longwood Program. He completed a National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)-funded fellowship in experimental therapeutics of neurodegenerative disease at the University of Rochester, New York. He is a member of the faculty for the University of Rochester’s mindful practice curriculum for medical students and residents. Since 2011, he and his colleagues Ronald Epstein, MD, and Michael Krasner, MD, have facilitated “Mindful Practice: Enhancing Quality of Care, Quality of Caring, and Resilience,” a twice-yearly residential continuing medical education (CME) training program for medical educators, physicians, and other health care providers from around the world. A former Dean's Teaching Fellow, Dr. Marshall is the recipient of multiple teaching awards, including election by students to the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, and the White Coat Ceremony keynote.

Learning Objectives

1. Characterize ways that physicians most commonly experience burnout and which three apply most closely to your own work setting.

2. Demonstrate three mindfulness-enhancing practices to develop greater emotional awareness, compassion and resilience when facing difficulties in the workplace.

3. Describe three ways that help you to work more mindfully with patients and clinical teams and to grow and flourish in the workplace.
Audience Engagement System

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Formal Practice
Imagine…

• … that you are flourishing at work
  • Perhaps you’re using your expertise effectively
  • Perhaps you’re providing a certain quality of attention
  • Perhaps you’re experiencing a sense of well-being

• What would you notice about yourself?
• What would others notice about you?
• What might you notice about your work environment?
THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Emotional intensity and unpredictability
Productivity/time pressures
Frequent interruptions
Dysfunctional computer systems
Meaningless administrative tasks
↓ control / ↑ responsibility
Isolation
Institutional strategies: promoting flourishing

- Value the formation of people, not just the production of “products”
- Clinician well-being = quality
- Cognitive ergonomics / human factors
- Non-punitive support and feedback when things go wrong
- Lower admin / regulatory burden
- Discussion groups, sharing stories
- Team and community building
- Individual skills training -- mindful practice, communication, stress & conflict management
- Coaching – peer, professional
- Values-driven leadership
- Non-stigmatizing behavioral interventions for those at risk
- Swift action for egregious behavior
Interventions to prevent and reduce physician burnout: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Gale PM, et al. (2005) JAMA Intern Med

Summary

Background: Physician burnout has reached epidemic levels, as documented in national studies of both physicians in training and those in practice. The most common interventions were mindfulness and stress management-focused efforts, communication training, small group discussions, local practice modifications, and duty hour changes.

...both individual-focused and structural or organisational strategies can result in clinically meaningful reductions in burnout among physicians. Further research is needed to determine which interventions may be most effective in specific populations, as well as how individual and organisational solutions might be combined...

Findings: We included 25 studies (65 points), 1 (64 points); 0.91-1.34; p < 0.05; I² = 0%. 16 studies resulted in clinically meaningful reductions in burnout among physicians. Further research is needed to determine which interventions are most effective in specific populations, as well as how individual and organisational solutions might be combined to deliver even greater improvements in physician wellbeing than those achieved with individual solutions.

THE INNER ENVIRONMENT
WORK-RELATED DISTRESS

...a problem of *the relationship between* clinicians’ sense of calling and meaning – and the environment in which they work

Burnout

“*Erosion of the soul... deterioration of values, dignity, spirit and will*”

*Maslach C 1976*
Why clinician distress matters

Quality of care
- Lower quality of technical care
- Riskier prescribing practices
- Medication errors
- Lower adherence

Patient experience
- Poor relationships
- Poor communication
- Low satisfaction

Clinician experience
- Erosion of altruism and empathy

Safety
- Unsafe behaviors
- Not following protocols

Professionalism
- Unprofessional conduct
- Poor relationships with staff
- Substance abuse

Costs
- Attrition and job turnover
- Recruitment costs


Becoming aware

- What are some early warning signs of stress?
- What do you feel in the body at those times?
- What emotions accompany these signs of stress?
- What thoughts?
- Discuss with a partner
How am I responding?

Unhealthy reactions

“Survival skills”

Mindful responsiveness, resilience and growth

What’s the opposite of burnout?

Work engagement  Resilience  Well-being

Burned out  Distressed  Flourishing
“Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between stimulus and response and, in that pause, to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight.

The capacity to create ourselves, based upon this freedom, is inseparable from consciousness or self-awareness.”

Rollo May (1975)

Some working definitions:

**Mindfulness**

The awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally

*(Kabat-Zinn)*
Mindful Practice

Ronald M. Epstein, MD

Reflection and self-awareness help physicians to examine their beliefs and values, deal with strong feelings, make difficult decisions, and resolve interpersonal conflicts. Organized activities to foster self-awareness are part of many family medicine residency programs and some other residency and medical school curricula. Exemplary physicians seem to have a capacity for critical self-reflection that pervades all aspects of practice, including being present with the patient, solving problems, eliciting and transmitting information, making evidence-based decisions, performing technical skills, and defining their own values.

This process of critical self-reflection depends on the presence of mindfulness. A mindful practitioner attends, in a nonjudgmental way, to his or her moment-to-moment purposeful attentiveness to one’s own physical and mental processes during every day work with the goal of practicing with clarity and compassion...

“We miss more by not seeing than by not knowing.”
William Osler
In the beginner’s mind the possibilities are many, in the expert’s mind they are few.

Shunryu Suzuki
Mindfulness is a capacity that can be grown
Well-being is about engagement... not withdrawal

Mindfulness is a community activity
Why mindfulness matters

• Reduced clinician stress and burnout
• Improved attentiveness
• Increased positive emotion and energy
• Cognitive de-biasing and flexibility → more accurate dx
• Less implicit bias
• Greater comfort with uncertainty

• Improved safety (falls, needlesticks, errors)
• Improved clinician empathy and patient-centered orientation
• Better patient ratings of communication, relationship
• Greater sense of community

Why are some people more resilient than others under extreme stress?

• Your psychological skills
• Your relationships
• Stress inoculation

• Your hormones
• Your brain
• Your social environment and your genes
Deep listening

**Focus on your partner’s experience**

- Set your intention to:
  - Spend most of the time listening
  - Be curious about your partner’s experience
  - Ask questions that aim to deepen understanding

- Don’t:
  - Interrupt or tell your own story… even if it may seem uncomfortable to wait until your partner is finished

**… and be aware of your own responses**

- Set your intention to:
  - Note what is attracting your attention about the story
  - Observe – but not act on – your urge to comment, interpret, give advice or talk about your own experiences

- Don’t:
  - Make interpretations
  - Give advice
  - Talk about yourself
Meaningful experiences

Focus on a time during your work as a clinician or educator that was particularly meaningful for you.

Perhaps it was a time when you were moved in some way, or may have been a time associated with great joy or great sorrow.

Try to recall aspects of the situation that caught your attention, and perhaps other aspects of the situation that only became obvious to you later.

Take a few minutes to write a brief narrative about the experience. When finished, you’ll share the experience in pairs or small groups.

Storyteller

Read your story – or tell in your own words:

- What happened?
- What did you notice?
- What thoughts and feelings did you have?
- What was most memorable about the experience?
- What did you learn?
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Debrief

What was it like to tell your story in this way?

What was it like to listen in this way?
What can I do to bring mindfulness into the workplace?

Mindfulness practices in the workplace

• STOP
• Doorknobs
• Where are my feet?
• Just like me
## Look inside yourself

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<th>The Dark Side</th>
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<td>Knowing one’s limitations</td>
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Mindfulness and Gratitude

- **Conscious intention** to be grateful

- **Attention** to goodness in the world (over and over again)
  - Generosity, beauty, kindness, caring, courage, strength

- **Attitude** of gratitude
  - Habits of mind – attention, curiosity, presence
  - Actions in the world – helping others, being there
Benefits of Gratitude

- Positive emotions in yourself (McCullogh et al 2002; Watkins et al 2003)

- Physical well-being

- Caring thoughts and actions toward others (Algoe and Haidt 2009)
Commitment exercise

- Consider practices that help you to be more present, attentive, mindful, compassionate and/or grateful.

- Consider what you’d realistically be able to do, with little effort.

- Consider how you’ll remind yourself.

- Write a note to yourself as a reminder. You can do it on a mobile device if you wish.
Formal Practice

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Questions