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Continuing Education for Rehabilitation Professionals



Burnout in Healthcare: Strategies for Individuals, Families and Professionals

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This presentation is provided through the NeuroInstitute – the educational division of NeuroRestorative.

Objectives

Following the presentation, the participants will be able to...

- Understand the concept of “burnout” generally and in the healthcare industry.
- Understand burnout at the individual level.
- Understand burnout at the family level.
- Understand burnout at the provider level within healthcare and rehabilitation.

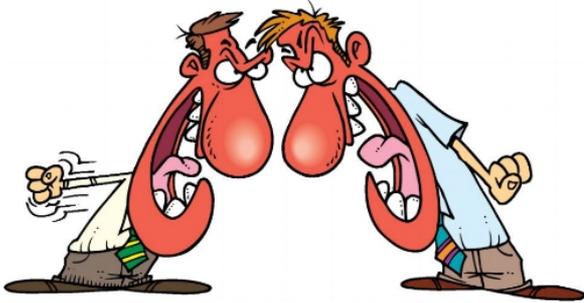
BURNOUT....Sometimes it is hard to know at first!

Zebra goes to the Vet for a check up and says, “Doc I think I am losing my stripes... I must have a skin disease”.

The Vet says “Didn’t you recently move down by the river next to the crocodile farm? Do you think that has anything to do with your symptoms?”



BURNOUT.... Some of the signs



Agitation



Difficulty making decisions/choices



Low to No Energy



Depression/Anxiety



Denial – “I’m Good”

What is burnout and how might it look?

Now that I have your attention... burnout vs. stress response.

First, burnout is a common term used for “Stress”. Stress or Stress Response is a term that is used to characterize the physical, cognitive and emotional response from the body during times of stress.

Examples:

At work: a person may begin to show up late for their job, or focus on leaving early. You may also see where a person may call in sick more often.

At home: a person may become disengaged with family or friends. The individual may feel exhausted and show that they are not keeping up with their own care and/or the care of their home.

Medically: a person may experience undue gastrointestinal irritations; medical consultations tend to rise without significant evidence that there is an underlying problem. A person may also develop conditions earlier than genetics would predict including high blood pressure, diabetes, skin diseases, irritable bowel syndrome, autoimmune disease, etc.

What is burnout and how might it look?

Research has demonstrated the following three components to measuring Burnout or the Stress Response

Exhaustion – people affected feel drained and emotionally exhausted, unable to cope, tired and down, and do not have enough energy. Physical symptoms include things like pain and stomach or bowel problems.

Alienation from activities (home or work) – people who are burned out find their jobs increasingly stressful and frustrating. They may start being cynical about their working conditions and their colleagues. At the same time, they may increasingly distance themselves emotionally, and start feeling numb about their work.

Reduced performance – burnout mainly affects everyday tasks at work, at home or when caring for family members. People with burnout are very negative about their tasks, find it hard to concentrate, are listless and lack creativity. A person may begin to perform the bare minimum instead of doing their very best.

Ref: Informed Health Online [Internet]. Cologne, Germany: Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG); 2006 (updated 2017).

Individual Level

What are the medical implications of burnout and high stress?

There are also health related problems that may occur with acute and prolonged stress responses.

Health Problems Related to Stress (WebMD, 2018)

Heart disease. Researchers have long suspected that the stressed-out, type A personality has a higher risk of high blood pressure and heart problems. We don't know why, exactly. Stress can directly increase heart rate and blood flow, and causes the release of cholesterol and triglycerides into the blood stream. It's also possible that stress is related to other problems -- an increased likelihood of smoking or obesity -- that indirectly increase the heart risks.

Doctors do know that sudden emotional stress can be a trigger for serious cardiac problems, including heart attacks. People who have chronic heart problems need to avoid acute stress -- and learn how to successfully manage life's unavoidable stresses -- as much as they can.

What are the medical implications of burnout and high stress?

Health Problems Related to Stress (continued)

Asthma. Many studies have shown that stress can worsen asthma. Some evidence suggests that a parent's chronic stress might even increase the risk of developing asthma in their children. One study looked at how parental stress affected the asthma rates of young children who were also exposed to air pollution or whose mothers smoked during pregnancy. The kids with stressed out parents had a substantially higher risk of developing asthma.

Obesity. Excess fat in the belly seems to pose greater health risks than fat on the legs or hips -- and unfortunately, that's just where people with high stress seem to store it. "Stress causes higher levels of the hormone cortisol," says Winner, "and that seems to increase the amount of fat that's deposited in the abdomen." It's an emergency response.

Diabetes. Stress can worsen diabetes in two ways. First, it increases the likelihood of bad behaviors, such as unhealthy eating and excessive drinking. Second, stress seems to raise the glucose levels of people with type 2 diabetes directly.

What are the medical implications of burnout and high stress?

Health Problems Related to Stress (continued)

Headaches. Stress is considered one of the most common triggers for headaches -- not just tension headaches, but migraines as well.

Depression and Anxiety. It's probably no surprise that chronic stress is connected with higher rates of depression and anxiety. One survey of recent studies found that people who had stress related to their jobs -- like demanding work with few rewards -- had an 80% higher risk of developing depression within a few years than people with lower stress.

Gastrointestinal problems. Here's one thing that stress doesn't do -- it doesn't cause ulcers. However, it can make them worse. Stress is also a common factor in many other GI conditions, such as chronic heartburn (or gastroesophageal reflux disease, GERD) and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

What are the medical implications of burnout and high stress?

Health Problems Related to Stress (continued)

Accelerated aging. There's actually evidence that stress can affect how you age. One study compared the DNA of mothers who were under high stress -- they were caring for a chronically ill child -- with women who were not. Researchers found that a particular region of the chromosomes showed the effects of accelerated aging. Stress seemed to accelerate aging about 9 to 17 additional years.

Premature death. A study looked at the health effects of stress by studying elderly caregivers looking after their spouses -- people who are naturally under a great deal of stress. It found that caregivers had a 63% higher rate of death than people their age who were not caregivers.

What generally can be done about managing stress and reducing burnout?

- **Community** Burnout is less likely to occur within a positive and supportive working environment. Social support from supervisors, co-workers and family members all contribute to this positive atmosphere.
- **Fairness** People who perceive their supervisors and mentors as fair and equitable are less susceptible to burnout.
- **Values** Incongruence between your own and your workplaces' values is a very important contributor to burnout. For example, being a gay individual at a school that is not gay-friendly can be very taxing. In contrast, a value match is associated with greater personal efficacy.
- Do these risk factors for burnout sound familiar? If so, you may want to:
- **Evaluate your habits.** Are you a procrastinator or someone who takes too many things on at once? Are there things you can do that can decrease your workload exhaustion and give you time to rest? Look at your "to do" list and see if you can make it more realistic.
- **Make a plan.** Take out your calendar, make a plan and stick to it. That, of course, is easier said than done. For help making positive and long-lasting behavioral changes, check out these two articles in APA's Help Center: "Making Your New Year's Resolution Stick" and "Making Lifestyle Changes that Last".
- **Find social support.** Call an old friend or your parents and ask them to listen or just hang out for a while.

American Psychological Association, 2018

Family Burn Out

Introduction to Family Burn Out

- Families undergo a series of complex emotions, changes, experiences, characteristics, fatigue and stress when caring for a loved one with a brain injury and/or neurologic condition
- Feelings and emotions can be:
 - Simple and immediate such as apprehension or alarm
 - Complex and specific such as anger, grief, despair, feelings of abandonment, loneliness, or inability to adequately care for their loved one
- Day to day living has its own individual stressors for each person and family. However, when daily living is compounded with a traumatic event, the family structure can be significantly impacted.

Coping with Trauma

- Every individual handles trauma differently.
- The definition of trauma is:
 - "An emotional shock that creates substantial and lasting damage to the psychological development of an individual"
 - The main components are feelings of victimization, loss, and individual or family pathology. Therefore, extended periods of denial as the caregiver attempts to manage the trauma and stages of grief can result in burn out eventually
- Common symptoms of family managing trauma can include confusion, irritability, anger, guilt, frustration, fear, trepidation, and depression.

Strong Predictors for Family Recovery



- Ability for family to listen and implement recommendations
- Spirituality of the family
- Ability for the family to perceive hope from the tragic incident
- Family's willingness to take care of themselves

Factors of Vulnerability

- There are many factors that influence if, how, and when a family will burn out when caring for their loved one.
 - Pre-injury family dynamics and burdens can become exacerbated following a traumatic event such as a brain injury
 - Marital stress, financial stress, abuse, alcoholism or drug abuse
 - Post-injury family dynamics are often altered and renegotiated after a traumatic event.
 - The family's attitude about the injury, illness, and rehabilitation will impact burn out
 - Financial burdens and lack of social support will add stress onto the caregivers

Factors of Vulnerability

- Research on this topic has found the following:
 - Persons served with depression increase the family's burden and also increases the rates at which the family members become depressed
 - Younger families have an increased risk for burnout
 - This has been found to greatly increase in the family has financial problems, poor social networks, or their daily life routine is altered
 - Families from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at increased risk for burnout
 - Families who have conflict with the treatment / clinical team are at increased risk for burnout

Factors of Vulnerability

- Research Study:
- A qualitative online study researched 4 domains associated with caring for a loved one with disabilities:
 - 4 domains: practical concerns, disrupted family dynamics, emotional burden, and positive experiences
- The study found that financial concerns, coordination and responsibility of care, diverted attention from other family members, and social isolation all contributed to the significant rates of burn out of the caregivers.

Coping Strategies Used During Family Burn Out

- As families begin to feel burn out, their self-esteem declines and they can begin to develop a stress response which is their own coping strategies to manage their emotions
- Families begin coping when they feel:
 - They are no longer able to control their space
 - They lose control of their role
 - They feel overwhelmed with the work and responsibility on them
- Coping strategies serve 2 main functions:
 - 1. They focus on the cause of the stress (problem-oriented coping)
 - 2. Reduce individual's emotions following a stressful situation (emotion-oriented coping)
- Coping strategies can be positive or negative:
 - Negative – divorce, drug or alcohol use,

Intervention Strategies for Families

- Psychoeducational interventions
- Psychotherapy
- Increasing Social Support
- Improving Support Patterns and Long-Term Care Supports
- Active Listening
- Last Resort: Psychopharmacology

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Caregiver Burn Out

Introduction to Caregiver Burnout

- Individuals are supported by many types of providers during the rehabilitation process:
 - Doctors
 - Nurses
 - Therapists
 - Specialists
 - Direct-Care Specialists
- Rehab environments can be highly stressful.
- Important for Service Providers to maintain good physical, emotional and mental health.

Burnout Defined

- In 1974, the term burnout was coined by Herbert Freudenberger, an American-German psychologist who was conducting research on volunteers in a free clinic (Bridgeman, Bridgeman & Barone, 2017).
- A 2012 article within the Journal of Applied Psychology defines employee burnout as a progressive psychological response to chronic work stress, involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment (Dunford et al., 2012).

Burnout Defined (cont.)

- Burn out is important, because it leads to absenteeism, performance issues and increased employee turnover.
- Burnout syndrome is increasingly recognized among healthcare professionals, with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality estimating that burnout may affect 10–70% of nurses and 30–50% of physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.
(Bridgeman et al., 2017).



Canary and the Coalmine

- Coal miners would use canaries to detect unsafe conditions within the coalmines.
- Healthcare workers are much like the canaries in detecting unsafe conditions and illnesses of patients.
- Burnout prevention or rescue should address the health of the canary (caregivers), as well as the condition of the rehab environment (Honavar, 2018).



Major Dimensions of Burnout

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization and cynicism
- Sense of ineffectiveness
- Doing the bare minimum



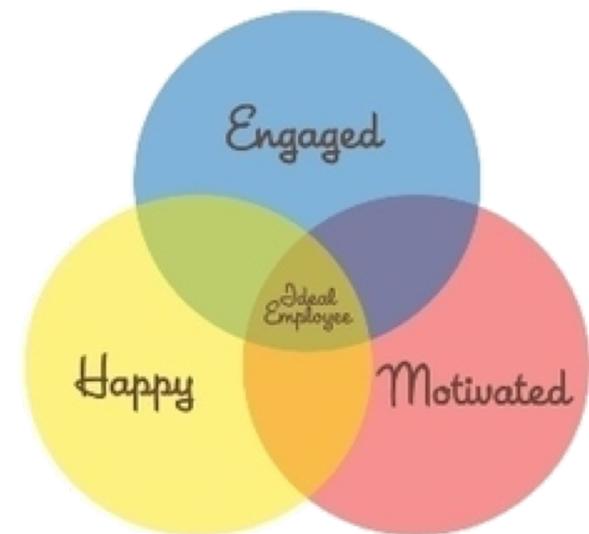
Other Causes of Burnout

- Complexity of work
- Role conflict
- Work overload
- Management styles
- Lack of Social Support
- Organizational changes
- Overtime
- Inappropriate work conditions
- Organizational inefficiencies
- Lack of success
- Lack of career advancement opportunities
(Amiri et al.,2016)

Dr. Freudenberger offered strategies for preventing burnout, which included:

- Guarding against rapid turnover in the hiring process
- Avoid task redundancy
- Allow employees to share and reflect on their collective experiences
- Limit work hours
(Bridgeman et al., 2018)

EMPLOYEE TRIFECTA



Burnout Prevention (cont.)

- Combining the resilience of the employee with organizational effort can make a stronger canary and a less toxic work environment (Honavar, 2018).
- Areas of focus for prevention:
 - Personal tools to decrease stress and energy drain
 - Personal recharge activities
 - Organizational support to decrease stress and energy drain
 - Organizational recharge activities

Personal Areas of Burnout Prevention

- Personal tools to decrease the stress and energy drain
 - Practice conscious stress release and mindfulness
 - Make gratitude and celebration a habit
 - Repeated small doses of self-care
- Personal Recharge Activities
 - Create boundaries between work and home (i.e., Mr. Rogers)
 - Respect your life outside of work
 - Healthy Habit Improvement
 - Physically working out
 - Ensure recreation/leisure activities

Organizational Areas of Burnout Prevention

- Organizational support to decrease stress and energy drain
 - Ensure organizational and leadership commitment to staff wellness
 - Conduct surveys to get feedback on burnout levels
 - Support flexible work hours
- Organizational recharge activities
 - Establish onsite exercise, mindfulness and wellness programs
 - Promote periodic organization-centered social activities
 - Establish a culture of caring and build and maintain a culture of gratitude

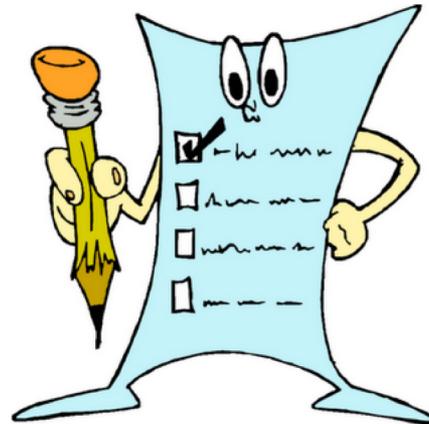
Self-Awareness and Testing

There are many tools online that provide self-assessment of burnout. These tools can help you check yourself for burnout.

Mind Tools, a skills-building resource for job seekers, provides the following assessment:

Burnout Self-Test: Are You at Risk?

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm



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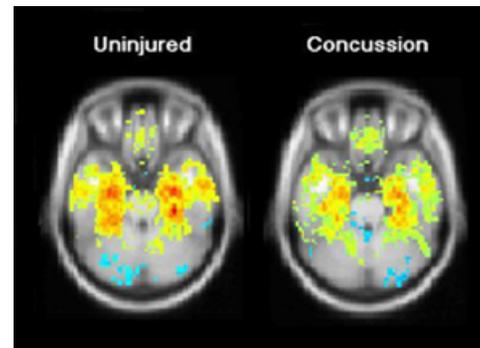
Healthcare Burn Out

What is burnout in Healthcare and Rehabilitation

- As noted, Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, and negative attitudes and feelings toward one's co-workers and job role. Burnout is associated with job dissatisfaction, low commitment to the job and absenteeism. It can lead to a number of physical health concerns, including headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, more susceptibility to colds and the flu, and sleep disturbances. In fact, burnout has been characterized as a diagnosable mental health disorder by the World Health Organization.
- Now, take the above statement and apply this to healthcare where the job is tending to others.
- Psychologists have identified a number of workplace factors that can lead to burnout, including:
 - **Workload** People need an opportunity to rest, recover and restore the balance to their work lives. If they do not have that rest, their risk for burnout increases. This restoration period also allows for the development of new skills and the refinement of existing skills.
 - **Control** People who feel that they have freedom to determine what they do and when they do it are less likely to experience burnout. Additionally, the chances of burnout increase if you feel that you can't express yourself on the job, or if you are taking on multiple roles that conflict with one another.
 - **Reward** Lack of meaningful rewards is also an important risk factor for burnout. Reward can also come as a way to improve one's knowledge or encourage professional development in the work place. This provides outlets of creativity, friendships, and support.

What is burnout in Healthcare and Rehabilitation

Not making mistakes in healthcare... this is a concept that seems to have become stronger as time moves on, in part due to focus on patient safety standards.



There is research on burnout and safety outcomes. Much of the research showing the relationship between burnout and patient safety outcomes has used self-reported perceptions of patient safety. A research study in Switzerland researched (2014) burnout in 54 ICUs that linked clinician safety perspectives and standardized mortality ratios. The link seems to be both lack of motivation or energy and impaired cognitive function. Emotionally exhausted clinicians curtail performance to focus on only the most necessary and pressing tasks. Negative cognitive changes, emotional distancing, and loss of information for decision making result in impaired capacity to manage in a dynamic and complex condition such as the ICU.

What is burnout in Healthcare and Rehabilitation

Technology is great. In some cases it helps us to improve our efficiency and is utilized to take away the mundane part of our jobs so that we can focus on more critical aspects.

However, technology can cause....

- fatigue
- overload
- stress response
- excessive demand



While modern communication has increased the ease of our life, it has also significantly increased the speed at which it moves. Exchanges that would take weeks by mail can now happen on the other side of the world in seconds or minutes. This can lead us to... do more.

Modern tech has gained such a presence in our lives that it's easy to become addicted to social media and smartphone use to the point it starts impacting our relaxation and sleep. In turn, this causes even more stress to build up through the day, resulting in a cycle of stress accumulation. (Strategic Psychology, 2018).

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Conclusions

Burnout is a condition that exists and may occur even in the best of circumstances.

ALL persons are susceptible to burnout.

Variety and control of one's work conditions and life are key ingredients to helping prevent burnout.

Having family, friends, and social support systems is also key to prevention.

Burnout has a high rate of occurrence in healthcare, yet we seem to forget to take care of those who take care of others.

DISCONNECT periodically.

Burnout is treatable. It is worth the time and cost!