Approaches to Wellness: Individual Strategies

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- I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in the presentation.
Objectives

- Understand that individual wellness strategies are one component and should be included in the context of organizational strategies.
- Learn about a menu of individual immediate and long term wellness strategies.
- Commit to developing your individualized wellness plan.
ACGME Physician Well-Being Symposium
ACGME Symposium on Physician Well-Being

- Call to national leaders - November, 2015 and 2016
- Planning began after 2 resident deaths by suicide in NY City, 2014 - occurred within one week of each other
- Collation of compelling data
Call to Action

- Professional obligation to act
- Can no longer blame the victim: need to focus on systems and culture
- Both individual and organizational strategies are important
- Learning environment imprints on trainees and faculty and sets stage for future practice/behaviors
Strategies to Promote Well Being

- One size does not fit all
- Individual and personal journey
- Each of us must find strategies that work for us
Literature on Well Being Promotion

- Quill et al. *Arch Intern Med*, 1990
- Jones SH. *AM J Hospice and Palliative Med*, 2005
- AAP Curriculum on Resilience in the Face of Grief and Loss
Interventions to Prevent and Reduce Physician Burnout: a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

- Identified 15 randomized trials and 37 cohort studies
- Individual-focused and organizational strategies
- Outcomes included improvements in burnout, depersonalization, emotional exhaustion
- For individual focused improvements:
  - Mindfulness-based training
  - Self care and stress management
  - Communication skills

- West CP, Lancet 2016
Wellness Strategies

- Immediate, In the moment
- After the event
- Long term
Immediate, In the Moment Strategies

If you are anticipating a challenging or emotional encounter:

- Center yourself. This may include deep breath, silent commitment to your patients and profession
- Prepare yourself as to what may occur
- Not a script but an anticipation of what might happen and how you may respond
- Develop self insight into your response to strong emotions
Immediate, In the Moment Strategies

- Take 3 breaths—Mindfulness meditation
- Pause and modify your response to maximize positive outcome—respond instead of react
- Excuse yourself and step away to collect thoughts
- Go outdoors or to private place
- Take time to rethink strategies/return
Strategies Following an Event

- Reflect on what you might have changed, what may have been out of your control
- Reach out to a valued colleague to discuss
- Play a favorite song
- Check calming photos on your phone/computer
- Password for phone/computer- reminder of your values, why you went into medicine: empathy#, humanism*
Strategies Following an Event

- Do something nice for yourself- treat yourself to get tea, chocolate bar, walk outside
- Brief yoga pose- such as surrender pose, tree pose
- Review mission statement (individual or team)
Long Term Strategies-Maintenance of Your Well Being

- Occupational Strategies
- Approaches to life
- Emotional/cognitive strategies
- Relationships with others
- Spirituality
- Promotion of self care
Occupational Strategies

- Honor lifelong learning
- Be gentle with yourself (humility in acknowledging can’t be perfect) and forgive yourself
- Learn to relax
- Learn to set limits, say “no”
- Ritual of transition from work to home
Approaches to Life

- Find meaning in our work
- Maintain humor
- Keep perspective
- Time for play
- Daily release to let go of day’s concerns
- Celebrate successes
Rachel Naomi Remem –
the 3 question journal

- What surprised me today?
- What touched my heart today?
- What inspired me today?

-http://www.rachelremen.com/growing-new-eyes/
Emotional/Cognitive

- Means to express emotions
- Take time to grieve losses
- Time for reflection
- Debriefing/talking with others
- Identify signs of stress and frustration
Forum for Discussion of Difficult Events- Debriefing

- Debriefing comes from the military
- Address intellectual decision making
- Acknowledge and articulate emotional impact
- Address ways to integrate experiences, rather than pretend that “it never happened”
Relationship with Others

- Connect with family and friends
- Work relationships as “family”
- Create a culture of caring
- Set and maintain boundaries
Relationship with Others

- Ask for help
- Reach out to others who may be struggling
- Send a card, email, call
- Include laughter and humor
Spirituality/Religion/Values

- Belief in something beyond self
- Community of efforts
- Reflect on values
- Prayer
- Meditation
Mindfulness

❖ Meditation
  o Conscious intention to be present in the moment
  o Shift from reacting to perceptions to observing them

❖ Self-Compassion
  o Capacity to comfort self when we suffer, fail or feel inadequate

-Kabat-Zin, J, Germer C, Neff J
- www.mindfulselfcompassion.org
Mindfulness Practices in Everyday Activities

- Waiting for the elevator
- Waiting in shopping line
- Starting your car
- Showering
- Time with pets
- Eating a meal or snack
- Taking a walk
Daily Mindfulness Practices in Serving Others

- Intention to do kind things for others
- Open the door for someone
- Pick something up which was dropped
- Directions to someone who may be lost
- Volunteer to help colleague with a task
- Reach out to someone who appears sad/distressed
Self Care

- Medical/mental health care
- Sleep hygiene
- Good nutrition
- Exercise/yoga/tai chi
Self Care

- Hobbies
- Vacations
- Time in nature
Attention to self care is not self-centered
Attention to self care is not self-centered

“If we don’t take care of ourselves we cannot survive”

Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Book of Joy
Develop a Wellness Plan

- To maintain our work as humanistic providers, we must be nourished ourselves.
- As one develops a career development plan, consider developing an individualized wellness plan.
- Acquiring methods to maintain wellness can lead to lifelong strategies for both personal and professional lives.
## Individualized Wellness Plan

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Many apps exist that address health and well-being.

Assist with:
- Organization
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Meditation
- Healthy eating
Don’t just survive
Aim to thrive
Summary

- Deliberate attention to our well being is critical
- Reflect on what individual strategies work best for you
- Design your own individualized wellness plan in order to thrive in your life and work
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