

Practical Approach to Walking in Balance

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Official Disclosure Statement

It is the policy of the AAFP that all individuals in a position to control content disclose any relationships.....

In general, and legally for me, this is true. I have no relevant financial relationships to disclose

But...

WARNING!

- ...I have a clear bias!
- I love Family Medicine!

Learning Objectives

- Recognize, accept and when possible reframe stressors
- Consider some useful tools
 - For personal as well as patient care use
- Transform stress into healthy growth!
- Rekindle your fire and enthusiasm
- Challenge you to walk your talk!

- First...

It's not you!!!

- It's...
- The system is not healthy
- You do not need to be more “resilient”
- These tools can help you as you work to change your systems



Good news!

- 75% of Family Physicians are satisfied with job
 - 89% of those who are sole owners say this!
- 55% of you would be a Family Physician again if you did it over
- 79% of you have a good sense of well-being
- 80% of AAFP members say “I enjoy my work”
- Where are you on this scale?

But...

- We do not feel respected by other physicians
- We do not have the time we need with patients
- Almost everyone believes family physician burnout is prevalent among colleagues
- 38% are feeling like they are burning out
- 11% (1 in 10) feel completely burned out

Burnout

- A work related phenomenon
- Can impact personal life as well
- Can be burned out at work, but overall happy
- Lack of burnout does not equal well-being
- We will focus on ways to help improve your sense of well-being

Really important point!

- Your challenges and hurdles will not change with platitudes or thoughts of the day or yoga
- You are not solely responsible for “getting to a better place”
- The system that most impacts you has real issues
- One key is to get to the right tables
 - Be part of the discussions
 - Nothing about us without us!



Truths and Tools For You, and Can be used with Patients

Truths

- Words are important
- Interactions are critical
- Stress is impacted by control and isolation
- Choice is a powerful tool

Words Are Important

- In general, do you use positive or negative words?
- Does that change when you are stressed
- The subtle danger of “I have to go to work today.”
- TGIF vs TGIT
- “Problems” vs “Opportunities”
- Compliance vs adherence
- PCP vs Family Physician
- Burn-out vs Resiliency

Interactions and contact are important

- Exercise
 - Introduce yourself briefly, but avoid titles and roles!
- Share with each other one thing
 - That is stressing you now, and
 - One that has helped you cope
- You each have 2 minutes

Interactions and contact is important

- How did that go?
- Introductions without titles can be odd!
- Did you share stresses?
- Sharing can lead to attitude change
- You are not obligated to “fix” anything!
- What were some coping strategies?

Life is Stress!

- Everything causes “stress”
- Stress is required for physiologic growth
 - Bones, muscle strength, and so on
- Stress is required for intellectual growth
 - Our best teachers “stressed” us!
- Stress is required for emotional/spiritual growth
- Others look to you for clues

What Impacts Stress?

- Autonomy
 - Control is good!
 - Lack of control or input is not
- Connection
 - Support is good!
 - Feeling isolated is not
- How many of you feel in control and supported?
- You likely have more than you might think

How do you find control and support?

- Find ways of reframing difficult circumstances in how you
 - Think
 - Talk
 - Act
 - For me that manifests as “It’s all good!”
- In some ways, you created this reality for yourself!
- How you talk and act are key to re-creation!

Critical Tool

- Respect for others is key!
- Especially in disagreements or crucial conversations
- You are a leader in your practice
- How can you help your team and your patients feel supported and in control?

Basic Questions

- Why did you choose this profession?
 - To help people!
- Do you have role models you want to emulate?
- Do you know clinicians
 - Who seem not to like their jobs or patients?
 - That you never want to become?
- So did they at one point!

Where does your passion go?

- Your training may have contributed
 - Loss of self-confidence
 - Loss of sense of altruism
- Your employment status can contribute
 - Generational shift from “Calling” to “job”
 - The change to “shifts”
 - Fewer physician owned practices
- The pandemic and constant fear

It's all about Choice

- Every thought you have, every comment you make, every action you take...
- Moves you along a path
- You are becoming someone's role model
- Are you going down the negative path
- Or the positive one?
- It is always your choice!

Wellness is about Choice

- You **cannot** control the feeling you have from an incident
- You **can** control the way you respond to those feelings
- Over time, new response patterns can change emotional patterns
- If you are not satisfied how well you cope right now, make a different choice!

“Hurdles”?

- What are hurdles to different choices?
 - Other people’s attitudes
 - The “system’s” attitudes
 - Time constraints
 - Administrivia
- These can only be as big an issue as you allow!
- It’s hard...unless it is not!

Truths

- You can only control your actions
 - Not anyone else's
- We never really “Catch up”
- Things/Life does not suddenly
 - “...get better when...”
 - It mainly gets different!

Behavioral Choices

- Are you experiencing your life?
 - Or Delaying doing things you want to do?
- Commit to “experience” your life
- Explore your interests now
- Make moment to moment choices to enjoy the gifts of the “present”
- Enjoy what you do
 - Live passionately

Behavioral Choices

- How is your patience?
 - With your patients
 - With your staff
 - With your family
 - With yourself

Physician-Centered Care

- Taking “The History”
 - Much less personal connection with our patients
 - We emphasize certain aspects of the “history”
 - Social Hx: ??
 - Tobacco, alcohol, drugs...
 - Lists and templates

The Patient's Story

- Semantics
 - It is called “His” or “Her” story for a reason
- But we have lost the emphasis on obtaining stories
 - Instead we check boxes on templates.
 - More time is spent on “Chart care” than patient care
 - One of the dangers of the “EBR”!

Getting the Story

- How much time do we allow patients to tell their story before we interrupt and take control?
 - 15 seconds!
 - Pay for Volume
 - Time pressure
 - Significant oversight of our documentation
- Stories are key to health and healing!
- And new E/M guidelines can help!



Putting Choice into Action

Transform Yourself and Your Practice

- Create more Patient-Centered processes
 - In your practice
 - In your style
- Try to take one thing away to try
- We will review a few options
- This is like an “Art” class
 - You choose the media, color, technique
 - Time to create masterpieces!





Inventory

- How do you currently demonstrate your Truth?
- How do you share who you are?
 - At home?
 - In the office?
- Are you satisfied with what you manifest?
- Take note if you say “No” at a deep level!

Environment

- Surround yourself with
 - Meaningful relationships
 - As best you can at work
 - And at home
 - Meaningful “Stuff”
 - Photos
 - Candles, fountains, icons
- Minimize stressful images
- Share yourself!

Healthy lifestyles

- The key to handling stress
- ...and maintaining energy
- The foundation of any other technique
- In and of themselves can make a big difference.
- How do you feel about how you eat?

Diet Choices

- Drink Water!
 - Not sure exactly how much...
- Moderation
 - Caffeine
 - Alcohol
- The role of green and other teas
 - Making tea can be a ceremony

Other Choices

- In what ways do you incorporate exercise into your life?
- What is the best exercise?
 - What you will do consistently!
- Cardiovascular
- Flexibility
- Weight-training
- Yoga, Tai Chi, massage, etc
- “Nature Deficit Disorder”

Yoga Techniques (More detail next slides)

- Relaxation Breath (4-7-8)
 - For your use
 - For your patients
- Fire breath
 - For energy
- Poses and stretches
 - Can be done in a chair at work
- Yin Yoga!!

Relaxation Breath

- From Yoga
- Adapted by Dr. Andrew Weil
- Great for insomnia, panic disorders
- Technique
 - Inhale through nose for a count of four
 - “Hold” (don’t breath) for a count of seven
 - Exhale through mouth for a count of eight
 - Do four cycles
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324417#how-to-do-it>

Fire Breathe

- From Yoga
- Stimulates energy
- Technique is shown in this video
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gpYEvALCZA>

Arms Forward Stretch

- Bring arms to shoulder level.
- Clasp hands together, press them onto your chest.
- Lift head to stare at the ceiling
- Hold this position a second or two
- Inhale then Exhale
 - Lower head, press your chin onto your chest.
 - Stretch arms straight out in front of your chest
- Inhale
 - Return hands to the chest
 - Lift the head up and back.
- Do this three times

Yoga

- "Yoga" is often a technique that is active
 - It requires strength and balance
 - It is quite "Yang"
 - It can be very frustrating!
- Yin yoga is slow
 - Poses are held longer
 - No perfect pose exists as it depends on your body
 - Great for flexibility
 - "Osteopathic yoga!"
- One three minute yin yoga pose demonstrated
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgsYVGvxKQI>

Benefits

- Yoga poses and breath work can help you handle stress
 - Anyone can do Yin or restorative yoga
- And you can use these techniques to treat patients!
 - For stress and anxiety issues
 - For depression
 - For flexibility
- For me: I teach Yin an hour a week
 - Detox-Retox

Placebo Effect = Healing Response

- Treatment ally
- All treatments can have a specific effect
- All treatments have some healing effect
- All encounters have potential effect
- Key part of a good bedside manner
 - Often missing

Communication (Life/Leadership) Skills

- The Four Agreements (Don Miguel Ruiz)
 - Be impeccable with your word.
 - Don't take anything personally.
 - Don't make assumptions.
 - Always do your best.
- AAFP (Doug Henley)
 - Assume Good Intent
 - Cheerful Persistence

Communication (Life/Leadership) Skills

- Make the effort to communicate with other people
 - Patients
 - Your Healthcare Team
 - Your friends and family
- Be tolerant
- Listen!
 - Allow others to speak
 - Open-ended questions
- Poor communication choices require much time to sooth unhappy/hurt people

The “Biggie”

- Recognize and respond to emotion!
 - Without becoming defensive
 - Or Angry
 - Or clicking into didactic mode
- Information does not overcome emotion!
- You are not required to “fix” anything
- Emotion is okay & real and needs validation

Handling Emotion

- Recognize it and state it
 - Bring the Inside Out!
 - “You are...” angry/frustrated/sad/whatever
 - Trust your intuition as to what it is
- Just listen
- Try not to say “I understand”
- Or “Don’t be...”
- Be okay with saying “I’m sorry you have to deal with this”

Personal “Power”

- What kind of image are you presenting?
 - How is it working for you?
 - For your patients?
- Everything carries potential meaning

The Outside Reflects “You”!

- Clothes are part of your persona
 - Who are you being right now
 - Why did you make your choices?
- Jewelry
 - Ornaments have a long history of symbolism
 - The metals, the stones and the style
- Your “environment” gives messages to others

Perspective is key

- Half-empty or half-full?
- Impacts your life path tremendously
- Impacts patient care tremendously
- Neither is better!
- Both approaches “work”

Half-Full Warning!

- Remember you always have a choice
- Today is yours for a reason
- The “challenges” you face can be seen as
 - Your teachers of the moment
- You chose this profession to help people
 - They are rarely at their best when they need it the most
- Laugh regularly and easily

Handling Life

- Things happen
 - I think for a reason!
 - But even if you don't subscribe to that view
 - They happen
 - And you have to respond
- What is the teaching you can get out of the moment?
 - What can you use to grow?
 - What can you learn so as not to repeat it?

Let's Prepare to Walk Our Talk!

If you can do it, you can teach it

Consider...

- How can you create sacred space around you?
- How can you change your work environment?
- How can you bring ceremony into your life?
- How can you bring gratitude into your life?

Create Sacred Space!

- Circles for meetings
- Comfortable surroundings
- Nice sounds like Water or Chimes
- Time for breathing, pausing, yoga
- Take the space with you
 - What you write with
 - What you drink with
- What one thing will you do?

A Day of Ceremony

- Implement ritual and ceremony
- Morning affirmation/beginning
- Yoga or prayer
- Make coffee/tea/water special!
- Enjoy sacred space
- Do something outside
- Experience your meals
- Cultivate thankfulness many times a day
- Have a closure to the day
- What one thing will you do?

Cultivate Thankfulness!

- You are doing what you dreamed of
- You are helping people every day
- You are where you are supposed to be right now
- Cool evening ceremony
- How will you demonstrate gratitude each day?
- At the same time
 - Be the change you want to see in the world - Gandhi

Prioritize Your Needs

- What do you need the most to regain your passion?
- What would best support your efforts?
- Write it down, address it to you
- Follow-up with yourself in 6 months

Create your Reality!

- Prioritize changes
- Identify resources needed
- Find ways to gain some control
- Create, nurture and utilize support systems
- Be part of your own solution
- You can restore your heart into your art of medicine!

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