BOUNCING BACK FROM BURNOUT

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Burnout is...

"an extended period of time when someone experiences exhaustion and a lack of interest in things, resulting in a decline in job performance."

--Dr. David Ballard, American Psychological Association’s Healthy Workplace Program
Signs of Burnout

- Every day is a bad day
- Caring about your work (or home) life seems like a total waste of energy
- You’re exhausted all the time
- The majority of your day is spent on tasks you find either mind-numbingly dull or overwhelming
- You feel like nothing you do makes a difference or is appreciated
- Physical signs and symptoms
- You want to isolate yourself
- Loss of motivation and passion
- Feelings of detachment
- Use of substances to cope
Things to Think About…

- When can you tell that you are getting burned out? What are the signs?

- What do you notice about your staff or co-workers when they seem burned out?
Causes of Burnout at Work

- Lack of control
- Unclear job expectations
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamics
- Mismatch in values
- Poor job fit
- Extremes of activity
- Lack of social support
- Work-life imbalance

What else??

Additional Concerns with Covid 19

- Heightened feelings of a loss of control
- Fear over risk of infection and safety
- Financial and economic concerns
- Additional social isolation
- Compassion fatigue
- Lack of information
Burnout among Dental Providers

- Dentists perceive dentistry as more stressful than other occupations
- 34% of those surveyed said they always or frequently felt physically or emotionally exhausted
- Our workspace (operatories) are small, confined spaces
- Dentistry attracts people with perfectionist, competitive, tendencies
- Not everything that contributes to burnout in dentistry can be eliminated, so we need to find coping strategies that work!
Burnout in Dentists: Dentist-Patient Interactions

- Burnout presents in professions with intense interactions and contact with others
- Patients who are angry, noncompliant, fearful, or have communication barriers
- We, as providers, have to proactively work to alter the interactions
Dental Directors and Dentists: Staff and Admin Challenges

- Lack of proper delegation
- Managing email and administrative tasks
- Managing difficult staff (or staff with difficulties)
- Much of what you deal with, may out of your control (regulatory changes, clinical requirements, pressures from payors)
- Juggling when everything is on fire...all the time
- Recognizing burnout in your staff and coworkers
Stress and Burnout: Dysfunctional Life Partners
The Interplay Between Stress and Burnout

- **Stress** involves *too much*: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically. Stressed people can still imagine, though, that if they can just get everything under control, they’ll feel better.

- **Burnout** is about *not enough*. Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring.
Welcome to STRESS population: 5(ish) billion

Burnout
### Stress vs. Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterized by</td>
<td>Characterized by over-engagement</td>
<td>disengagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>over-reactive</td>
<td>Emotions are over-reactive</td>
<td>Emotions are blunted</td>
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<tr>
<td>hyperactivity</td>
<td>Produces urgency and hyperactivity</td>
<td>Produces helplessness and hopelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of energy</td>
<td>Loss of energy</td>
<td>Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leads to anxiety</td>
<td>Leads to anxiety disorders</td>
<td>Leads to detachment and depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>disorders</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary damage is</td>
<td>Primary damage is physical</td>
<td>Primary damage is emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>physical</td>
<td>May kill you prematurely</td>
<td>May make life seem not worth living</td>
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Types of Stress

**Catastrophes**
- Life threatening situations
- Disasters

**Major Life Changes**
- Death of a loved one
- Divorce
- Imprisonment
- Job loss and major disability

**Daily Hassles**
- Jobs and workplace
- Personal relationships
- Everyday living circumstances
10% - 30% of ALL employees are currently experiencing reactions to stress that are affecting their performance at work.

Stress problems result in a 25% - 45% reduction in job performance.

Lost productivity costs industry $35 billion annually.

30% - 50% of all illness is stress related.

Absenteeism for stressed employees is 5 times the average.
But not all stress is bad…

Brief periods of stress (acute stress) can help with the following:

- Motivator
- Sharpens cognitive performance
- Increases physical capacity
Know Yourself!

There are many sources for stress, but understanding your perception and reaction to the stressor can help improve your ability to cope and reduce the impact of the stressor.
Know Yourself!

- Our personalities and temperaments have a significant impact on our perception of stress.
- Those who are decisive, self-reliant, high sense of self-worth and know how to relax are generally better able to cope.
- The amount of stress we can tolerate varies based on the cumulative effect of stressors but other factors like health, fatigue, and family situation.
- Past experience increases our ability to manage stress and develop coping skills.
- Think about if you react differently when stressors are activated by internal or external factors.
How do you react to stress?

- **Depression.** Sometimes stress may be too much to take. You might avoid the problem, call in sick to work, feel hopeless or simply give up. Chronic stress can be a factor in the development of depression or anxiety disorders.

- **Negativity.** When you don't cope well with stress, you may automatically expect the worst or magnify the negative aspects of any undesirable situation.

- **Smoking and Alcohol.** Even if you quit smoking long ago, a cigarette may seem like an easy way to relax when you're under pressure. In fact, stress is a leading cause of having a smoking relapse. You may also find yourself turning to alcohol or drugs to numb the effects of stress.
How do you react to stress? (cont.)

- **Pain.** Unconsciously clench your jaws or fists or develop muscle tension, especially in your neck and shoulders. Stress also may cause a variety of other health ailments.

- **Overeating.** Stress may trigger you to eat even when you're not hungry, or you may skip exercise. In contrast, you may eat less, actually losing weight when under more stress.

- **Anger.** Stress may leave you with a short fuse. You may find yourself arguing with co-workers, friends or loved ones — sometimes with little provocation or about things that have nothing to do with your stressful situation.

- **Crying.** Stress may trigger crying, sometimes seemingly without warning. Little things unrelated to your stress may leave you in tears. You also may feel lonely or isolated.
Moving From Burnout to Resilience
Dealing with Burnout: The “Three R” Approach

- **Recognize** – Watch for the warning signs of burnout
- **Reverse** – Undo the damage by managing stress and seeking support
- **Resilience** – Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health
Resilience Tip #1: Manage Your Stress Before it Manages You

The A-B-Cs of Stress

A = Activating Event

B = Beliefs & Perceptions

C = Consequences or Resulting Stress Reaction
Perception Matters

The way we experience an event influences our outlook on future situations and events. The connection between our perceptions, our outlook, and our reality.
Become Aware of “Irrational Logic”

- Magnification - making a mountain out of a mole hill.
- Personalization - relating everything that happens to yourself.
- Polarization - seeing everything in black & white, including non-absolutes.
- Over generalization - making blanket statements or predictions based on a single incident.
- Selective Abstraction - focusing on a single detail out of context.
- Emotional Reasoning - treating feelings as facts.
- Fantasy Logic - having unrealistic or fantasy based expectations of yourself and others.
Managing Stress: Keep Laughing

Recent studies show that laughter, and even the anticipation of laughter, can lighten moods. It may be difficult to see the funny side of stressful situations when you’re in a crisis, but taking time to find a reason to laugh can be a great stress antidote.
Resilience Tip #2: Dealing with Difficult Patients and the BATHE Technique

- Assess the **background (B)** of the problem. What is the patient experiencing today?
- Try to understand the **affect (A)** (emotion) evoked by the problem.
- Focus on what specifically **troubles (T)** the patient to determine the patient’s perception of the problem.
- Note how the patient is **handling (H)** the problem.
- Show **empathy (E)** and acknowledge feelings.

These steps enable the provider to convey understanding of the patient’s problem and reduce stress!

More Strategies for Difficult Patients

- Try to recognize negative emotional reactions in yourself.
- Identify what is difficult about an interaction with the patient.
- Clarify role expectations between dentist and patient.
- Collaborate with the patient to enhance compliance.
- Effective communication skills, empathic consideration of the patient’s viewpoint, acknowledgement of the patient’s feelings.
- Maintenance of dentist-patient boundaries.
Resilience Tip #3: Time Management

- Start your day with 30 minutes planning for your day
- Set up “buffer” time in your schedule to handle tasks times and follow up from meetings and appointments
- Schedule time in your calendar to finish tasks and assignments (color code them, if that helps)
- Practice ignoring your phone
- Shut your door, silence your message alerts, identify and minimize your distraction triggers
Time Management Best Practices

- Prioritize tasks
- Schedule daily, weekly, or monthly activities
- Delegate responsibility
- Learn to say no
- Write down objectives in order to meet deadlines
- Use a calendar to organize commitments
- Shift priorities to make room for more urgent tasks
- Reduce clutter and unnecessary paperwork
- Being able to give up total control
- Avoid procrastination
Time Management in Clinic: Maximize Efficiency

- Conduct time audits for procedures so scheduling supports the work
- Utilize staff at the top of their license
- Implement checklists and clear protocols
- Identify a “traffic cop” in the clinic who is keeping track of the patient flow
- Have an efficient strategy for emergencies
- Use templates in your EDR as timesavers
Resilience Tip #4: Delegation Tips

- Be Patient
- Don’t Over-Delegate
- Pick the Right People
- Be Specific
- Provide Training
- Touch Base without Micromanagement
- Allow for Variations in Work Style
- Offer Feedback
- Delegate Up and Down
- Say Thanks
Resilience Tip #5: Taming Email

- Once you read it, if it needs no action...DELETE IT, otherwise you’ll re-read it, wasting time
- If it needs action, add it to a task list with a date to respond. Once you respond...DELETE IT
- If you need it for a CYA or context for a project, save it as a text file and get it out of email...EMAIL IS AN INEFFICIENT AND TIME SUCKING FILING SYSTEM
- Set up email rules to better sort and respond to email
- If you need the email for someone’s contact information, save their contact info in your contacts
Resilience Tip: #6: Aerobic Exercise

- Releases muscle tension
- Burns off stress-produced adrenaline, which leaves the bloodstream and is consumed in the muscles
- Allows for post-exercise quieting of the sympathetic nervous system
- Results in post-exercise reduction of adrenaline
- Produces endorphins, the body's own morphine-like pain-killer
- Increases energy for daily living and for coping with stressful situations
- Lowers peak stress during intense, demanding situations
- Allows for faster recovery time from acute stress
Resilience Tip: #7: Eat Right

- Certain foods and drinks can aggravate stress
  - Caffeine and alcohol, sugary/simple snacks that create a surge in glucose which raises the stress hormone cortisol, foods with trans fats (chips, fries, etc.), sodas, energy drinks

- Certain foods are stress-preventers
  - Boost levels of serotonin, a calming the brain. Others cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. A healthy diet can help counter the impact of stress by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure
  - Complex carbs, oranges, spinach, fatty fish (Omega-3s prevent hormone surges), nuts, green tea, small bedtime snacks or milk before bed
Resilience Tip: #8: Sleep

- Sleep seems like the ultimate passive activity, and the least productive part of our day (or night), but the opposite is actually true.
- Sleep helps both the brain and the body rejuvenate.
- Sleep has been shown to help keep the body’s immune system strong, and can also help regulate moods and reduce stress.
- Sleep is a balancing act—both too much and too little can lead to health problems (heart disease, diabetes, etc.).
- Good quality sleep can be the first thing to be compromised when we’re overscheduled, overstressed, or suffering from depression.
Resilience Tip: #9: Get Some Support

- Nurture your social network
- Ask your staff and boss for help
  - Readjust workload
  - Training and resources
  - Role clarification
Resilience Tip: #10: Take Time Off

- Take a walk, get out for lunch, interrupt your day
- Honor your vacations and time off—long weekends can do the trick, but don’t let that stop you from taking that vacation you’ve been dreaming about
- “Minute Meditation”
- Find time for “restorative” activities
- Give your devices a vacation, too
Managing the Burned Out
Watch for Signs of Burnout in the Staff

Exhaustion results from the depletion of emotional resources to cope with the current work environment. This is the stressed out, overwhelmed employee.

Cynicism is an individual’s distant attitude toward the job. This is the disgruntled employee.

Inefficacy is a reduction in personal accomplishment. This is the employee who has developed a cynical attitude and has given up trying.
Actively Managing to Prevent Burnout in Staff

- Be Realistic When Assigning Tasks
- Follow the Passion
- Allow Side Projects
- Keep Reasonable Work Hours
- Schedule Breaks
- Be Flexible
- Don’t Spread Your Team Too Thin
- Define Concrete Roles
- Equip Your Team With Proper Tools and Resources
Actively Managing to Prevent Burnout in Staff (cont.)

- Provide Ample Support/Culture of Support
- Encourage Socializing
- A Team That Plays Together Stays Together
- Provide Ample Feedback
- Acknowledge, Reward, and Promote
- Support Staff Making Decisions
- Make Their Voice Heard
- Increase Their Coping Skills
Special Considerations for Covid Responders: A Marathon Not a Sprint

- Pay attention to basic needs (sleep, eating, hygiene)
- Monitor work hours and take breaks
- Safety and wellness
- Mental health support
- Supportive, empathetic leadership
- Watch for signs of PTSD and compassion fatigue
- Prioritize self care beyond just the basics
Final Thoughts

- Preventing burnout is an ongoing activity, especially with all of the special challenges we face today.
- Burnout and stress have a very real impact on your psychological, social, professional and physical well-being.
- Altering your perceptions and reactions to stressors can increase your ability to manage stress and burnout.
- Physician (dentist), heal thyself!
Additional Resources

- **Maslach Burnout Inventory**
  https://www.statisticssolutions.com/maslach-burnout-inventory-mbi/

- **Mayo Clinic’s Guide to Meditation**
  http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858

- **How to Improve Employee Burnout**
  https://blog.kissmetrics.com/prevent-employee-burnout/

- **Headspace Meditation App**
  https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19
THANK YOU!