Burnout in Physical Therapy
Examining Individual and Systemic Interventions for Burnout Prevention

Introduction
- DPT Regis University 2016
- Board Certified in Orthopaedics
- Fellow of AAOMPT
- Duke Spine Center
- Faculty - Duke Ortho Residency and OMT Fellowship

Introduction
- DPT Western Carolina University 2018
- Duke Spine Center
- Duke Orthopedic Trauma Center
- CBT-Based Skills for Physical Therapy and Pain

Stress and Body Responses
Biological Pathways of Stress: Common Biomarkers for Allostatic Load

Psychological and Social Interventions
- Psychological:
  - CBT, CFT
- Social:
  - Very complex issues
  - Call Social Work?
Tired and Frustrated

How can PTs make the biggest impact?

Culture Pulse: Well Being

- I feel **burned out from my work** (2nd lowest score)
- I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job
- I feel frustrated by my job
- I am working **too hard on my job** (lowest score)
- Events in my work unit affect my life in an emotionally unhealthy way
Define Burnout
Burnout Defined:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- (Lack of) personal accomplishment

Research on PT Burnout

- “The extent and causes of burnout among PTs and PTAs has been the subject of scant study.”
- 1997 - Burnout in orthopaedic physical therapists. JOSPT.
- 2002 - Prevalence and determinants of burnout among physical and occupational therapists
- 2018 - Stress and burnout in physical therapists (Anderson AZ Dissertation – not yet published)

Why do people burnout?


- Allostatic Load
  - the cost of chronic exposure to elevated or fluctuating endocrine or neural responses resulting from chronic or repeated challenges that the individual experiences as stressful

Allostatic Load in Physical Therapy

Consider patients who...

- Are in therapy for the wrong reasons
- Consistently no-show, arrive late, disinterested
- Are not open to therapeutic alliance

"PTs cannot expect to hit a homerun with every swing."
Helping or Enabling?

Evolution of Work

- Hunter-gathers – work as survival
- Greco-Roman understanding of work as an evil to be avoided, ability to live without working was a primary qualification for a genuinely worthwhile life


Evolution of Work

- Grandparents and great grandparents, products of Depression, World Wars, grateful to have work of any kind because it helped them and their family survive
  - Viewing work through lens of meaning and impact is rooted in entitlement
  - “You should just be happy to have a job"
Why Do People Burnout?

- **Internal Factors:**
  - Lack of resilience/grit

- **Environmental Factors:**
  - Work overload
  - Unreasonable expectations


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**Individual Interventions**

- Gratitude
- Maximizing lunch breaks and open appointment slots
- Investing socially
- “The Billion Dollar Drug” AKA Exercise
- CBT and positive psychology interventions

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**Environmental Factors**

- Poor workflow
- EHR Challenge
- Equipment needs
- Lack of control

**Avoidable Suffering**

- Patients who don’t heal
- Angry or rude patients
- Death of a patient
- Challenging social circumstances

**Resilience Training**

- Three Good Things
- Sleep interventions
- CBT
- Exercise

**Stigma Free Mental Health Treatment**

- Peer support groups

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**Why People Burnout**

- **Environmental**
  - Organizational improvements
  - Programs to improve documentation efficiency

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**Internal**

Social Investment
Emotional Support and Survival after Myocardial Infarction
A Prospective, Population-based Study of the Elderly
Lisa F. Berkman, PhD; Linda Leo-Summers, MPH; and Ralph I. Horwitz, MD

- 194 patients after heart attack
- How many died during first 6 months?

Social Investment and Health
Positive social interactions at work
- Healthier heart rate and BP
- Stronger immune response under stress
- More oxytocin
- Healthier cortisol patterns
- Lower absenteeism

Figure 1: Heaphy, E., & Dutton, J.E. (2008). Positive social interactions and the human body at work: Linking organizations and physiology. Academy of management Review, 33, 137 – 162; Theorell, T., Orth-Gomer, K., & Eneroth, P.

Social Investment and Productivity
Encouragement to Socialize Face-to-Face
Increased Energy
Enhanced Focus on Task

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Civility
- Qualities of civility include being attentive to colleagues, listening to their views and concerns, accommodating one another’s preferences, and anticipating the impact of one’s behavior on others
- Improved Civility (Osatuke et al. 2009)
- Improvements in the cynicism of burnout,
- Job satisfaction
- Organizational commitment
- Management trust.

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**Companies Fighting to Prevent Burnout**

Google  
UPS  
Apple  
IBM

**Maximizing your Lunch Break**

**Small Talk or PMR**

**Recovery during Lunch Breaks: Testing Long-Term Relations with Energy Levels at Work**

Marjaana Sianko, Ulla Kinnunen, Jessica de Bloom, Kalevi Korpela, and Sabine Geurts

This study had two aims. First, we examined whether lunch break settings, activities, and recovery experiences were associated with lunchtime recovery cross-sectionally. Second, we investigated whether lunchtime recovery was related to energy levels (i.e., exhaustion and vigor) across a 12-month period.

We collected longitudinal questionnaire data among 841 Finnish workers (59% female, mean age 47 years) from 11 different organizations in various fields at two time points (spring 2013 and 2014). We used hierarchical regression analysis to test our hypotheses.

We found that recovery experiences, that is, psychological detachment from work and control during the lunch break, were related to successful lunchtime recovery. After controlling for background factors, main job characteristics (demand and autonomy), and the extent of lunchtime activities, lunchtime recovery was related to a decrease in exhaustion and to an increase in vigor one year later:

- Detachment from work related tasks and perceived they had control during lunch = successful lunchtime recovery
- Decrease in exhaustion and increase in vigor one year later
Exercise

- 30-60 minutes, 3 to 5 times per week
- 43% fewer days of poor mental health per month
- “Significant and meaningful” association between exercise and mental health

Aerobic or gym
- Cycling
- Popular sports
- Recreational
- Running/jogging
- Walking
- Winter/Water Sports
- Household

4 week Exercise Intervention

- At baseline,
  - High Burnout [37.6%]
  - Medium burnout 27.9%
  - Low burnout [34.5%]
- After 4 weeks of exercise
  - High burnout [14.9%]
  - Medium 41.2%
  - Low [43.9%]

Organizational/Administrative

- Changes in Mid-year and End-of-year reviews
- Decrease burden of documentation
- CBT-based skills and continuing education
- Control over length of lunch
- Control over length of evals/returns
- Access to residencies and fellowships
- You’re boss tells you to “stop burning the midnight oil” when you stay at work 15 minutes late

Environmental Factors
Administration/Management

- Continue to promote employee autonomy
- Guide goal setting to promote control
  - Employee should feel comfortable being completely transparent with goals
- Lunch Time and Break Time autonomy
- Make exercise a priority

How to address Internal factors

Active Constructive Responding

- If you allow someone to live in their positive emotion for 20 seconds, their subjective well-being will improve for 5-7 hours, as well as elevating yours for 3-4 hours!
  - Exercise: Pair up, have one member pick something an event or moment that went well this week, and the other member will actively listen and ask follow-up questions

Discover the Power of Habit

- > 40% choices are products of habit
- "The daily office" of monastic communities
- CBT-based "mini practices"

Amy Wrzesniewski's "Job Crafting"

- The physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work
- Example of the housekeeping staff
  - Differences in how they described job tasks and level of skill required
  - Expanding beyond traditional job duties for human flourishing

Gallup report revealed 21% of millennials say they've changed jobs within the past year, which is more than three times the number of non-millennials who report the same

Finding the "magical unicorn" versus job crafting
CBT Coping Thoughts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>THOUGHTS</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient arrives 20 minutes late to appointment</td>
<td>&quot;They do not care about PT&quot; &quot;This will not be a good appt&quot;</td>
<td>More stressed, rushed, jaded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe something came up I will do the best I can with the time we have</td>
<td>Open, focused, better rapport and better care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Address Environmental Factors


- Positive emotions improve MD diagnostic accuracy and efficiency
- Would patient outcomes improve if hospital administration placed greater emphasis on employee satisfaction?

Barbara Fredrickson's "Broaden and Build Theory"

- Positive emotions broaden one's awareness to novel, varied, and exploratory thoughts and actions
- Employers can create more innovative, creative, intellectual, social staff who find solutions they might otherwise have missed


Conclusion