BURNOUT AND HOW TO REKINDLE THE FLAME: STRATEGIES FOR PRECEPTOR AND RESIDENT BURNOUT

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- List some of the major reasons for burnout, specifically those related to pharmacist burnout.
- Identify those at risk of burnout.
- Describe strategies to avoid and/or mitigate burnout in residency directors, preceptors, and residents.
- Discuss preventative measures to help avoid burnout.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

- First coined in 1974 by Freudenberger
- Freudenberger began to notice the decline in work related enthusiasm and the increase in stress and overall disregard for his profession and that other professionals were experiencing this around him.
- Physical signs include: “exhaustion and fatigue, being unable to shake a lingering cold, suffering from frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances, sleeplessness and shortness of breath”.
- In general, these can be broken down into three main factors:
  - Emotional Overload
  - Feeling Depersonalized
  - Decreased sense of self-worth

Assessing Burnout

- Maslach Burnout Inventory is a 22-item instrument for translating the feelings of burnout into a numerical score.
- This is considered the gold standard for measuring burnout.
- This was originally used to evaluate this in healthcare and human services.
- Other, more general, scales were put together to assess this in a more general sense, but the original tool that is specific to health care was renamed MBI-HSS.
- As the criteria mentioned this scale will measure emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization.
- Other scales include Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) which is a 10 question scale to measure stress.
- There is currently not a validated tool to measure pharmacist burnout specific to our work environment.
### BURNOUT IN HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS
- In a 2018 study, 53.2% of health-system pharmacists surveyed indicated a high degree of burnout in 1 of the categories of the MBI-HSS.
- In this same study, 8.5% scored high enough in all 3 subcategories to indicate burnout.
- Factors contributing to burnout include:
  - Unmarried or not in a stable relationship
  - No Children
  - Working more than 40 hours per week.
  - Having too many nonclinical duties (number 1 reported)
  - Inadequate time for teaching
- To note, similar trends are seen for those in community settings except the major contributing factors include time constraints, performance metrics, and lack of control.

### BURNOUT IN PHARMACY RESIDENTS
- In 2018, Zinurova and Dehart evaluated 505 PGY1 residents using a Web-based survey containing the PSS-10 and the number of hours spent sleeping or working.
- They found an average score of 17.6 which indicates moderate level of perceived stress.
- Higher scores were more apparent in those working more than 60 hours per week.
- The authors report that participants used positive coping mechanisms to deal with this stress that include:
  - Spending time with Family/Friends
  - Staying optimistic
  - Engaging in enjoyable activities
- A similar approach was used in 2017 by Le and Young including both PGY1 and PGY2 pharmacists.
- They saw an average rate on the PSS-10 of 19.
- Additionally, those working greater than 60 hours per week had higher levels of depression, hostility, and apathy.

### WHAT ARE SOME RISK FACTORS FOR BURNOUT?
- Maslach and Leiter compiled risk factors for Burnout in a 2008 article that include:
  - Workload
  - Control
  - Reward
  - Community
  - Values
- Specific Risk Factors for Health Care include:
  - Challenges of clinical work
  - Competing Demands
  - Stress Constraints
  - Performance Metrics
  - Lack of Control
  - Conflict with leadership
  - Technology limitations

### WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING BURNOUT?
- It has been shown that several negative outcomes can occur with those experiencing burnout these include:
  - Decreases in professionalism leading to patient dissatisfaction
  - Depression
  - Increase in medication errors and decreased patient safety
  - Suicidality
- Residency is inherently demanding
- As seen in the above, residents, especially those working longer hours, are at a high risk of burnout.
- Our residency preceptors could also be experiencing this, especially if there are teaching constraints on the program.
- All of this leads to the concern not only for our residents, but for our preceptors as well.

### HOW DOES RESIDENCY FIT IN
- Residency is inherently demanding
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[https://welkeung.org/](https://welkeung.org/)
As an original sponsor of the National Academy of Medicine’s Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience, ASHP is proud to represent pharmacy in interprofessional efforts to address this critical workforce and patient care issue. ASHP is committed to fostering and sustaining the well-being, resilience, and professional engagement of pharmacists, pharmacy residents, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians.

Some of the goals of this program include:
- Raise visibility of clinician anxiety, burnout, etc.
- Improve understanding of challenges faced
- Providing the evidence for increasing patient care through provider self-care

These recommendations are offered from 2018 review by Reich across several healthcare settings:

- Involve Leadership
- Choose Incentives Wisely
- Encourage a Work-Life Balance
- Encourage Peer Support
- Furnish resources for self-care and mental health
- Target burnout from day 1 of professional school

The AMA has a series of resources for creating a culture of wellbeing through:

- Creating a wellness framework
  - Examples: Identify wellness advocates, Work with leadership to commit to wellness, define team wellness
- Gather your team
  - Examples: Create a team where everyone is committed to success
- Develop a wellness program
  - Examples: Identity and implement interventions and communication plans
- Frame individual wellness
  - Examples: Encourage personal care
- Combat burnout and create a culture of wellness
  - Examples: Encourage team to seek and offer help and adapt and grow the program

Addressing the work-life balance is key for those working greater than 40 hours per week.

Creating support systems
- We should start to encourage family support systems, but from a professional standpoint there are ways of creating an environment of increased support.

Promoting individual self-care
- This can take on a variety of methods to help to promote better health

Providing Mental Health Services
- In severe cases, you may want to make mental health services available in order to help to treat existing mental health issues.

It all comes down to balance. If we give in one sphere, then we will require adjustment in another.

As is mentioned in each of the listed studies it is usually the loss of personal time that creates an increase sense of always being on edge while at home and the workplace.

If you have a preceptor experiencing a problem in work-life balance, then it may be important to have a direct discussion with them +/- their supervisor to discuss work strategies that may help give them more balance at home. This could even include taking a break from the program if there are too many work-related activities.

If you have a resident dealing with work-life balance, it may be important to evaluate their schedule and build a different pace from other residents or move slower paced rotations forward to allow for the resident to adjust or deal with life events.

Support systems can be key in stressful environments. As co-workers, or mentors, it could be difficult for us to build personal support systems for our residents or preceptors other than to encourage family or friend support in difficult times.

However, we can encourage mentorship. Whether he be with a preceptor, former resident, etc. This can help to create a safety net to help prevent some of the stressors that the resident may experience.

Additionally, this could help with percept, especially new preceptors. Pairing them with experienced preceptors could help to lessen the stress of new residents.

Additionally, it could be important to provide a high standard of open communication throughout your program to allow preceptors and residents the opportunity to express concerns.
PROMOTING SELF-CARE

- Promoting self-care programs can be as simple as talking to residents and preceptors upfront about different programs in your organization or helping them with online resources.
- These self-care techniques can focus in many realms, but should focus on mental and physical techniques to reduce stress and focus on relaxation.
- Physical techniques could include: exercise routines, diet advice, yoga etc.
- Mental techniques could include: meditation, counseling, etc.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Although sometimes over looked it is important to recognize the mental toll that burnout can take on a professional.
- Depression and suicidality can be major risks in those that have experienced a high-level of burnout.
- It is important to identify the mental health resources available to you and your co-workers as part of your organization. This could take the form of dedicated counselors, online counseling offered by your program or health insurer, etc.
- It might be beneficial to include these in an official policy for your residents in order to provide effective communication of these resources.
- It can also be important to build strategies for helping to deal with these issues for residents and preceptors.

GRIT AND TEAM BUILDING

- Grit
  - Definition: Firmness of mind or spirit: unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger
  - Determining the ability of your resident’s or preceptor’s ability to respond to burnout or increases in stress can help you to determine the amount of workload or program that they may be able to handle
  - Team Building can be an important part of helping to relieve burnout through building a team that can offset the weaknesses of other members of that team.

GRIT

- Angela Duckworth created a scoring scale to help determine grit.
- Angela Duckworth defines grit as “Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't. Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something. Instead, grit is about having what some researchers call an “ultimate concern” — a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is about holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow. Talent and luck matter to success. But talent and luck are no guarantee of grit. And in the very long run, I think grit may matter as least as much, if not more.”
- You can find more about this measure at: https://angeladuckworth.com/qg/

STRENGTHFINDER TESTING

- Strengthfinder testing can be an interesting way of finding out what each residency preceptor or resident may be the best in.
- There are four domains that are utilized in these tests that include different sub-categories. They are: Executing, Influencing, Relationship Building, Strategic Thinking.
- It could be of interest to look at the top 5 strengths of each individual and pair them in a complementary way to create effective team-building.
- This is a proprietary test and will need to be purchased but is an option to identify inner strengths.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- With all that we have reviewed so far, it may be of use to put it into a practical sense.
- Resident Development Plans: It could be of use to identify different wellness goals for your residents. Additionally, you could add grit scoring or team building techniques in order help your preceptor participate in the residents learning plan that helps to decrease and prevent burnout.
- Preceptor Development Plans: It may be of use to create a private wellness preceptor development for preceptors experiencing burnout in order to help lessen the impact of burnout on the individual and to help communicate a long-term plan for their continued participation in the resident program.
- Program Development Plan: This is of special importance. It can be effective to correlate the above strategies into an overarching plan that can be reviewed regularly in order to create a decrease in burnout and prevent burnout in your program.
Preceptor Burnout Prevention Strategies

- Preventing burnout in preceptors can be difficult considering these people are your colleagues.
- It is important to observe for the signs of burnout in preceptors.
- Prevention strategies for preceptors can include some of the following:
  - Discussing with Administration the possibility to build additional time into their schedule for teaching-related activities.
  - Providing topics on burnout in your preceptor development topics including prevention and treatment of burnout in a pharmacy residency preceptor.
  - Creating individual pharmacy preceptor wellness plans.
  - Providing regular meetings with preceptor to discuss various topics including well-being.

RDP Burnout Resources

- RPDs can have a difficult time in dealing with burnout themselves, since they are dealing with a multitude of stressors including accreditation, resident, and preceptor well-being, etc.
- It may be important to know your options as an RPD if you experience burnout. These could include identifying a residency coordinator to help with some of the burden of managing the residency program and cross training your preceptors in the event of illness or leave of absence.
- For the prevention of burnout in RPDs, it may be important to ask your administration for some scheduled time in order to deal with the spectrum of running a residency program.
- Finally promote a feedback culture (or yourself as an RPD, as others, such as preceptors), can reach out to you if they feel that you are at risk for burnout.

Various Personal Examples of Burnout Reductions Strategies

- Here are some examples that I have seen in practice that may help to less the effects of burnout or prevent burnout:
  - Having a residency mentor that not only introduces new residents to the program, but introduces them to the area. This can be especially important for residents moving in the area from other parts of the country to help them feel welcome and reduce initial stress.
  - Providing a resident residential handbook. A handbook with different business, housing organizations, etc. to introduce the resident to the area and help them adjust to their new environment.
  - Potlucks and birthday celebrations—Celebrating the resident’s birthday or having regular potlucks can provide team building and help to provide social support (especially if the resident is far from home).
  - Creating a resident intramural sports team.
  - Having feedback days at the resident or preceptor’s favorite restaurant.
  - Providing volunteering opportunities in the community whether that be a vaccination drive, a mission trip, etc.
  - Recommending mentoring literature or supportive media.
  - Expressing gratitude in a timely manner for when your residents or preceptors go above and beyond.

Conclusions

- Burnout is a real and serious consequence of a variety of stressors not only in healthcare but in other professions.
- Burnout can lead to serious consequences for pharmacists, pharmacy preceptors, and pharmacy residents.
- It is important to recognize the problem signs of this in your RPD, pharmacy preceptors, and residents.
- There are a variety of methods for combating and preventing burnout in pharmacists.
- It is important to recognize that doing so will not only help our program but the patients we serve.
Which of the following are major reasons for Pharmacist Burnout?

a) Pharmacists having a great work-life balance
b) The Pharmacist working on average 40 hours per week
c) Pharmacists having too many nonclinical duties and inability to teach
d) Pharmacists having great social support networks

Which of the following are general strategies for addressing burnout?

a) Choose Incentives Wisely
b) Encourage a Work-Life Balance
c) Encourage Peer Support
d) Furnish resources for self-care and mental health
e) All of the above

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