

# Balancing It All

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A Physician's Guide to Understanding and Managing Stress,  
Burnout and Resiliency

# Introduction

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  - Has been a licensed therapist since 2004
  - Has been with OPHP since 2014
  - Previous work with physicians includes working at State Medical Board of Ohio approved treatment facilities since 2007



# OPHP

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- The Ohio Physicians Health Program, Inc. (OPHP) is a nonprofit organization which offers confidential assistance to physicians and other healthcare professionals who may be affected by mental, emotional and behavioral illness, substance-related and addictive disorders, or other issues impacting their health and well-being. OPHP coordinates evaluation and treatment, facilitates interventions, provides comprehensive monitoring services, and delivers educational presentations throughout Ohio. OPHP operates independently from all regulatory agencies and provides confidential services to the fullest extent allowed by law.

# Discussion Points

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- 1. What is Burnout and its impact
- 2. Burnout's development and symptoms
- 3. Practical solutions to prevent Burnout

# Why is it Important to Talk about Stress & Burnout

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- Currently 1 out of 2 Physicians report being burnt-out.
- Reducing physician burnout is *critical* to achieving the goals of redesigning the health care system and improving the health of patients, families, and communities in the United States.\*

- \*American Academy of Family Physicians (2014)



# Stress & Burnout

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- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) identifies three main core symptoms
  - 1) **Exhaustion** (physical)
  - 2) **“Depersonalization”** usually showing up as Compassion Fatigue, **sarcasm, cynicism and blaming your patients** (emotional)
  - 3) **“Lack of Efficacy”** presenting as thoughts of **“what’s the use”**, doubting that your work makes any difference and/or questioning the quality of your work (spiritual)

# Stress v. Burnout

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- Stress, by and large, 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 may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn't the same as too much stress.
- Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don't see any hope of positive change in their situations.
- If excessive stress is like drowning in responsibilities, burnout is being all dried up.



# Healthcare Professionals Stress& Burnout Statistics

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- A recent (2012) broad-based study reported that 45.8% of physicians are considered to be experiencing at least one symptom of burnout. The same study found that there is currently a 35.2% overall burnout rate among U.S. physicians. (Shanafelt TD, Boone S, Tan L, et al, 2012)
- In 2013, 39.8% of physicians responded that they were burned out. In 2015, that number jumped up to 46%. In the most recent Medscape survey in 2017 that number is now 51%. (Medscape, 2015 & 2017)
- The 2015 Medscape survey results reflect this same pattern, with the highest burnout rates found in critical care (53%) and emergency medicine (52%), and with half of all family physicians, internists, and general surgeons reporting burnout.
- Physicians are almost twice as likely (40.2% to 23.2%) to be dissatisfied with their work-life balance than the average working U.S. adult (JAMA, 2012)
- The physician suicide rate is one of the highest in occupations (300-400 a year) (NY Times, 2014)



# Stress & Burnout

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- Middle career physicians were more likely to have high emotional exhaustion and be burned out than early or late career physicians. Depersonalization, on the other hand, which is the psychological withdrawal from relationships, was found to be highest among early career physicians and then decreased incrementally in prevalence among middle and later career doctors.\*

- \*(Liselotte N Dyrbye, Prathibha Varkey, Sonja L Boone, Daniel V Satele, Jeff A Sloan, Tait D Shanafelt, 2013).

# Stress & Burnout

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- The presence of physician burnout has been shown to
  - Decrease physician's professionalism and the quality of medical care they provide
  - Increase medical errors and malpractice rates
  - Lower patient compliance and satisfaction with medical care
  - Increase rates of physician substance abuse, suicide and intent to leave practice



# Stress & Burnout

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- Common causes include \*
  - changing roles and responsibilities,
  - metric accountability,
  - increasing administrative demands,
  - electronic record documentation and reporting,
  - a loss of autonomy,
  - and a general sense of loss of purpose and loss of control.
- \*Alan H. Rosenstein M.D., M.B.A, Physician stress and burnout: The causes and potential solutions for nephrologists (2017)

# Additional Factors for Stress & Burnout

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- Lifestyle
  - Working too much, without enough time for socializing or relaxing
  - Lack of close, supportive relationships
  - Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
  - Not getting enough sleep
- Personality
  - Perfectionistic tendencies; nothing is ever good enough
  - Pessimistic view of yourself and the world
  - The need to be in control; reluctance to delegate to others
  - High-achieving, Type A personality



# Stress & Burnout

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- Physical Signs of Burnout
  - Feeling tired and drained most of the time
  - Lowered immunity, getting sick a lot
  - Frequent headaches or muscle pain
  - Change in appetite or sleep habits

# Stress & Burnout

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- Emotional Signs of Burnout
  - Sense of failure and self-doubt
  - Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated
  - Detachment, feeling alone in the world
  - Loss of motivation
  - Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
  - Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment



# Stress & Burnout

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- Behavioral Signs of Burnout
  - Withdrawing from responsibilities
  - Isolating yourself from others
  - Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
  - Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
  - Taking out your frustrations on others
  - Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early

# Physician Isolation

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- “Physician burnout, often defined as emotional exhaustion, ineffectiveness, and depersonalization, may be linked to four values characteristic of physicians and reinforced in medical training: service, excellence, curative competence, and compassion. Although each one is a virtuous strength and source of pride for physicians, each possesses a destructive “dark side” – deprivation, invincibility, omnipotence, and isolation.”
- - Annie Nedrow, MD, MBA, Nicole A. Steckler, PhD, and Joseph Hardman, MD (2013)



# Burnout's Impact

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- Burnout
  - Burnout is *not* an attitude problem
  - Burnout is a *workplace* problem

# Systemic v. Individual

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- Studies have found that self-awareness and mindfulness training can reduce physician burnout and increase both physician well-being and patient-centered qualities.\*
- There is a growing trend among health systems and other employers of physicians to adopt more system-level interventions, such as implementing institutional success metrics that include physician satisfaction and well-being, and developing practice models that preserve the decision-making autonomy of physicians.\*\*
  - \*Krasner MS, Epstein RM, Beckman H, et al. Association of an education program in mindful communication with burnout, empathy, and attitudes among primary care physicians. JAMA. 2009;302(12):1284-1293.
  - \*\*Dunn PM, Arnetz BB, Christensen JF, Homer L. Meeting the imperative to improve physician well-being: assessment of an innovative program. J Gen Intern Med. 2007;22(11):1544-52. Epub 2007 Sep 22.

# Physician Help?

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- Research indicates that many physicians are reluctant to engage in face-to-face counseling...— yet they're often in desperate need of a compassionate listener who understands the enormity of the work, life and family challenges they face. (Physicians Wellness Services Website)
- Vanderbilt's Physician Wellness program states one of the key components in helping physicians deal with stress and burnout is support from other physicians.





# How Do We Deal With Stress?

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- Mayo Clinic



# Resilience

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- The ability to develop constructive adaptation to adversity and traumatic experiences.
- Individuals can earn resilience through experience and hardship- in particular by developing qualities that facilitate appropriate coping strategies, adaption, and recovery from stress. (Psychology Today, 2016)



# Resiliency Tools

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- Find a Mentor
- Meditate/Mindfulness Exercises
- Humor
- Nurture Self-Esteem
- Nourish your creativity (Music, Art, Photography, Writing, Woodworking, etc.)
- Make peace with your past
- Counseling

# Mindfulness/Meditation

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# Self-Care

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- Work-Life Balance Means Making Time for...
  - Time with Family and Friends
  - Hobbies
  - Exercise
  - Nutrition
  - Spiritual life
  - Seeing your own healthcare providers



# Exercise is Critical for Self Care

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# Self- Care

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- How to Implement
  - Set Realistic Goals
  - Change is stressful
  - Understand Acceptance (Control?)
  - Do not expect change to be quick
  - Do not make more changes than are necessary
  - Progress slowly
  - Take baby steps

# Self-Care

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- Self-Awareness
  - Setting limits and maintaining healthy boundaries
  - Recognizing own compulsive triad- Doubt, guilt feelings, and an exaggerated sense of responsibility
  - Having realistic self knowledge
  - Recognizing own risky coping behavior



Sarri Gilman

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# Importance of Self-Care in Developing Resilience

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- Professional Life
  - The longevity and quality of our career
  - The longevity of our patients and the quality of care that they receive
  - Affects patients' perceptions of the quality of their healthcare
- Personal Life
  - Improved Physical & Emotional Health
  - Better Relationships with Family and Friends
  - More satisfied Work-Life Balance

# What is OPHP doing?

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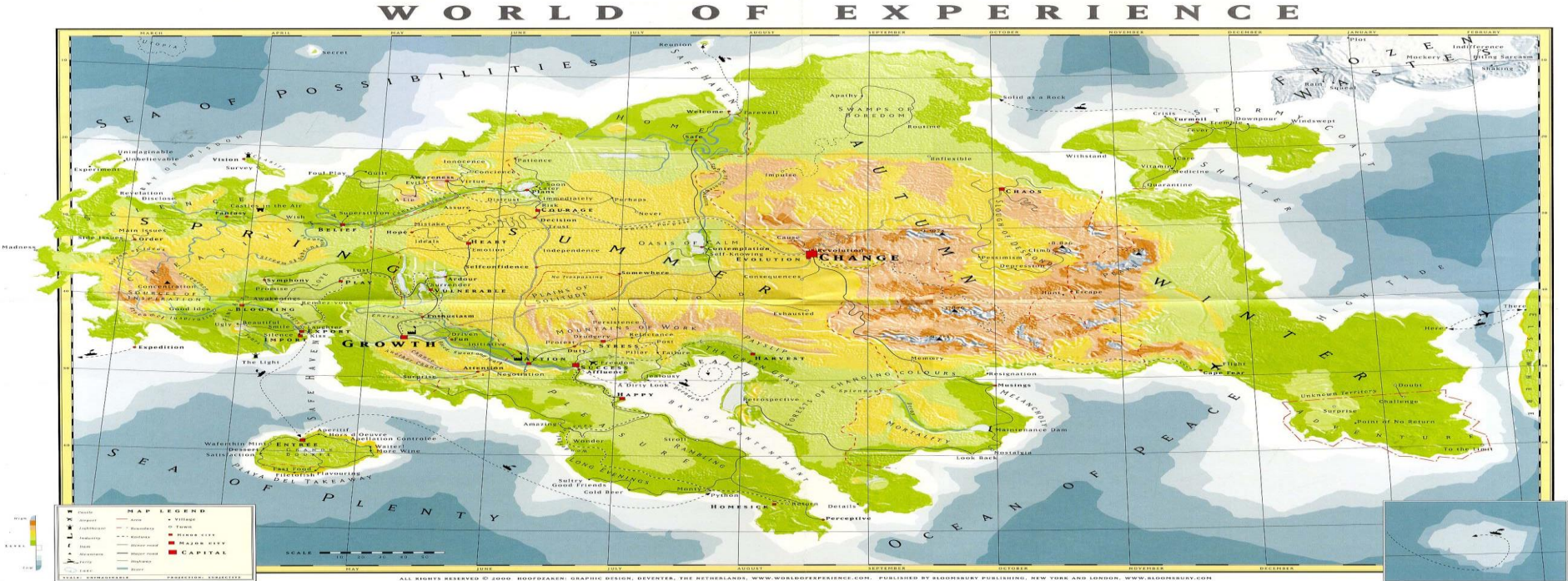
- OPHP- Provide confidential preliminary assessments, and establish coaching/counseling agreements
- Referrals to local psychologists, therapists and if needed psychiatrist
- Develop physicians support groups (internally/externally)
- Physician based telecommunication EAP systems
- Local and Statewide Wellness Coalitions
- Legislation



Stressfree.org

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# Map of Experience





# Mindful Exercises

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- Mindful Breathing- Do 6 second breathing cycles, Focus on your breathing- your breathing coming in and out, clear your thoughts- Try this for Two minutes
- Mindful Observation- Focus on a natural object for a minute or two (tree, body of water, etc.), Visually explore and connect with object- what's is its role in the world- try this for two minutes



# Mindful Exercises

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- Mindful listening- Select a piece of music you have never heard. Listen to it without prejudgment of genre, title or artist. Explore the sound, how it makes you feel, what it says to you
- Mindful awareness- Think Of something you do everyday (Starting up your computer, Opening a door, etc.) When you do this touch point take a moment to reflect on where you are and how you feel. Take moments to slow down and appreciate

# Mindful Exercises

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- Mindful Immersion- Take an everyday routine and re-experience it. Instead of feeling anxious or rushed to complete a task (i.e. vacuuming) be in the moment, notice how your body feels while doing task- what your mind is thinking, try to refocus and find a more creative or effective way of doing the task
- Mindful Appreciation- Notice five things in your life that usually go unappreciated (write them down in a notepad). Once you have identified the five things find out about their creation and purpose and how they support your life (i.e. your ears that let you hear the birds, electricity that's cooking your food)

# Resources

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- Books
  - *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle
  - *Creative Meditation and Manifestation: Using Your 21 Innate Powers to Create Your Life* by Amara Honeck
  - *Where to Draw the Line: How to Set Healthy Boundaries Every Day* by Anne Katherine
  - *At Personal Risk: Boundary Violations in Professional-Client Relationships* by Marilyn Peterson
- Apps
  - *Calm*
  - *Headspace*
  - *Mindfulness Daily*



# Resources

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- Articles

- [https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/contemplation-therapy/?\\_r=0](https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/contemplation-therapy/?_r=0)
- <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/mindfulness-meditation-may-ease-anxiety-mental-stress-201401086967>
- <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/1809754>
- <https://professionalboundaries.com/downloads/rx21/Professional%20Boundaries.pdf>
- [https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/11/doctors-boundaries-with-patients/?\\_r=0](https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/11/doctors-boundaries-with-patients/?_r=0)
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/stronger-the-broken-places/201611/grit-and-how-grow-it>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201609/deconstructing-the-neurobiology-resilience>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/health/sick-doc-cases-doctor-burnouts-are-rise-it-s-serious-ncna815936>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm>
- <http://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/7-tips-preventing-staff-burnout-healthcare>

# Resources

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- Websites

- <https://professionalboundaries.com/the-practical-professional.php>
- <https://www.mindful.org/>

# OPHP

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- Contact:
- Nelson Heise: 614-841-9690 ex 28 or [nheise@ophp.org](mailto:nheise@ophp.org)
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- Any Questions?