No One Should Care Alone
Creating Processes for Intentional Professional Connection in a time of “Social Distancing” … and Beyond …

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No One Cares Alone
What is your organization presently doing to create a deliberate professional “culture of connection”?
Crisis?

危機

Danger  Opportunity

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Physician Burnout 2017

Mean 44%

Shanafelt et al, Mayo Clinic Proc 2019
High Burnout 2017

Adapted from Shanafelt et al, Mayo Clinic Proc 2019
Distress

“A multidimensional construct that includes burnout, depression, stress, work-life integration, professional satisfaction, and fatigue ….”

Shanafelt et al 2019
Our Programming

Clinicians       Administrators       Patients and Payors

Adapted from Brightman, B.  wklf.com
‘DEATH BY 1000 CUTS’

2021 PHYSICIAN BURNOUT & SUICIDE REPORT

Medscape January 2021
How Do Physicians Cope With Burnout?

- Exercise 48%
- Talk with family members/close friends 43%
- Isolate myself from others 43%
- Play or listen to music 36%
- Eat junk food 35%
- Drink alcohol 26%
- Binge-eat 21%
- Use prescription drugs 3%
- Smoke cigarettes/use nicotine products 2%
- Smoke marijuana 1%
- Other 12%
- None of the above 2%

Medscape January 2021
Have You Ever Felt Suicidal or Attempted Suicide?

13%  Yes; I've had thoughts of suicide but have not attempted suicide

1%  Yes; I've attempted suicide

81%  No

5%  Prefer not to answer
Whom Did You Tell About Your Thoughts of Suicide?

- A friend or colleague:
  - Millennials: 25-39 years old
  - Generation X: 40-54 years old
  - Boomers: 55-73 years old

- A therapist:
  - Millennials: 39%
  - Generation X: 31%
  - Boomers: 23%

- A family member:
  - Millennials: 33%
  - Generation X: 37%
  - Boomers: 33%

- A counselor on a suicide hotline:
  - Millennials: 43%
  - Generation X: 36%
  - Boomers: 31%

- None of the above:
  - Millennials: 32%
  - Generation X: 40%
  - Boomers: 41%

Medscape January 2021
Does Your Workplace Offer a Program to Reduce Stress and/or Burnout?

- **35%** Yes
- **47%** No
- **18%** Don't know

Medscape January 2021
How Likely Are You to Participate in This Program?

- **42%** Very unlikely
- **28%** Neither likely nor unlikely
- **30%** Very likely

Medscape January 2021
Distress 911

Burnout
Compassion Fatigue
Decision Fatigue
Depression and Anxiety

PTSD
Economic Uncertainty

Moral Distress/Injury
Relational Dysfunction
Political Polarization

Social Unrest

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Loneliness?

“Despite living in the most technologically connected age in human development, people in this country are isolated and alone. The percentage of Americans who report being lonely — 40% — has doubled in a generation.”

Vivek Murthy, MD
Former Surgeon General of the US
What about Physicians?

“Graduate degree holders ... reported higher levels of loneliness and less workplace support than respondents who had only completed undergraduate or high school degrees.

Professional degrees (law and medical degrees) were the loneliest by far, scoring 25% lonelier than bachelor’s degrees, and 20% lonelier than PhDs.

Shawn Achor, MA

Achor. HBR 2018
“Social Distancing” = *Disconnection*

- Ourselves
- Profession
- Each Other
- Patients
"Being socially connected is our brain's lifelong passion .... It's been baked into our operating system for tens of millions of years.

Matthew Lieberman, PhD
Social: Why Our Brains are Wired to Connect
While many interventions to reduce burnout have been proposed, none is more important, in our view, than addressing the fundamental human need to belong.

Mark and Frederick Southwick, MDs
CULTURE
By
Design
“Not valuing time with other physicians or allowing for informal conversations leads to a soulless efficiency and professional isolation that drains physicians of our ability to help ourselves, help each other, and help patients.”

John Frey, MD
The way a group thinks, acts, and interacts?
“Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast”
A Case Study in Culture …

Yours!

Present?

Ideal?
Being a 5 STARRS© Connection Culture

S
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T
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A
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R
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R
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S
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Mark Greenawald, MD 2016. All rights reserved. Used freely with attribution
In the Last Week:

1 = Never      2 = Rarely      3 = Sometimes      4 = Often      5 = Daily
Service

We recognize our teammates for their good work.

1 = Never   2 = Rarely   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often   5 = Daily
Teamwork

We check in with our teammates, and know about their joys and struggles.

1 = Never    2 = Rarely    3 = Sometimes    4 = Often    5 = Daily
Attitude

We help to create a positive and encouraging team culture.

1 = Never  2 = Rarely  3 = Sometimes  4 = Often  5 = Daily
Reflection

We regularly connect with those things that have meaning in our work.

1 = Never    2 = Rarely    3 = Sometimes    4 = Often    5 = Daily
Renewal

We take time to celebrate our successes.

1 = Never    2 = Rarely    3 = Sometimes    4 = Often    5 = Daily
Self-Care

We take time for stress reduction/relaxation.

1 = Never    2 = Rarely    3 = Sometimes    4 = Often    5 = Daily
Connection Culture?
Your “Secret” Weapon …

Relationships with Colleagues
Taking a Layered Approach to Clinician In-reach

- Crisis Hotline
- EAP
- 2nd Victim Program
- Mental Health Resources
- Support Groups
- Peer 1:1 Support
- Healthcare Resources
- Peer Connection
- Social Gatherings
- Wellness Resources
- Well-being Committee
- Clinician Leadership (CWO)
Professional “Gathering Spots” for Clinicians

- Online forums (examples: Sermo, Doximity, MomMD, QuantiaMD)
- Finding Meaning in Medicine Discussion Groups: [Link]
- COMPASS Groups – Mayo Clinic (COMPASS — COlleagues Meeting to Promote And Sustain Satisfaction): [Link]
- Balint Groups: [Link]
- “Doctor’s Lounge”
- PeerRxMed
Check-in

• “in as little as 90 Seconds” once a week by text, e-mail, phone
• “for up to 90 Minutes” once a month, preferably “live”
• “90 minutes every 90 Days” for Rēcalibration
Weekly Check-in questions (“90 seconds”):
  • How are you doing?
  • How can I help/support/encourage you?

Monthly Check-in questions (“90 minutes”):
  • How are you doing?
  • What’s going well?
  • What are you struggling with?
  • How can I help/support/encourage you?
Quarterly Check-in questions (“90 days”):

• How are you living out your values?
• What are your goals over the next 3 months?
• What are your dreams both personally and professionally?
• When’s your next vacation/adventure?
• How can I help/support/encourage you?
What might you do to create a more deliberate professional “culture of connection” in your organization?
Additional References


• Southwick M, Southwick F.  The Loss of Social Connectedness as a Major Contributor to Physician Burnout. *JAMA Psychiatry.* 2020 May 1;77(5):449-450. [Link](#)
Let’s Talk
The following AMA resources are available to support your physicians and staff:

- Caring for Caregivers during COVID-19
- AMA COVID-19 Resource Page for Physicians
- JAMA COVID-19 Collection
- Steps Forward™
- Telehealth Implementation Playbook
- Behavioral health integration in physician practices

www.ama-assn.org
Upcoming Programming

February 4  Rethinking wellness: COVID-19 and the search for meaning  
Bryant Adibe, MD  
System Vice President and Chief Wellness Officer, Rush University System for Health

February 11  Physician burnout: It’s not a resiliency deficit  
Colin West, MD, PhD  
Professor of Medicine, Medical Education, and Biostatistics, Mayo Clinic
For questions, please email: Action.Labs@ama-assn.org
Physicians’ powerful ally in patient care