Running on Empty: A Prescription for Healing Physician Burnout

Jeff Morris MD, MBA, FACS:
Physician Coach & National Speaker
Studer Group

The “Silent Epidemic”
Physician Burnout

*Burn • out (noun)*

exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration

- Merriam-Webster
“American doctors are suffering from a collective malaise. We strove, made sacrifices - and for what? For many of us, the job has become only that - a job.”


Maslach Burnout Index (MBI)
3 Dimensions of Burnout

• **Emotional Exhaustion:** Sense of being emotionally drained while working with other people and the dread that accompanies thoughts of having to go to work.

• **Cynicism:** This dimension may be expressed as depersonalization, withdrawal, and compassion fatigue.

• **Ineffectiveness / Lack of Efficacy:** Loss of desire to accomplish great goals and make the world a better place.

To access the MBI, visit http://www.mindgarden.com/117-maslach-burnout-inventory.)
Burnout - Definition

“Progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose.”


The Geneia “Physician Misery Index”

At Geneia, we’re working hard to help physicians rediscover the Joy of Medicine.

We are solution-driven physicians, nurses and technologists

We are people who work on one thing: Helping you to improve your practice.

The 2015 Medscape survey results reflect 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.

Source: Medscape Physician Lifestyle Report 2015; Carol Peckham, January 26, 2015
Why are Physician So Burned Out, Anyway?

Healthcare Industry Trends

*Shaking Up the Industry*

- Healthcare funding has reached worrisome levels
- Physician shortage
  - Aging population
  - Volume / Acuity
  - Malpractice liability
  - Patient expectations
- Value-based purchasing
  - Transparency
- Technology
- Increase physician employment
Physician Hurdles

- Physicians feel **overworked**
- Many physicians are **sleep deprived**
- Physicians feel they spend **too little time with patients**
- Physicians feel they spend **too much time doing everything else**
- **Electronic Medical Record** implementation brings another set of time pressures

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*More than 80 percent of doctors say they are “overextended or at full capacity.”*

Burnout Psychological Factors

- Physicians are experiencing a severe loss of control
- There has been too much change, too fast
- Physicians face downward pressure in compensation, coupled with heavy debt
- Physicians face a growing sense of “disconnection” from patients and community
- Physicians must cope with the inherent stress of practicing medicine

Training Related Issues

- Many physicians need additional skills today beyond great clinical expertise

“The fund of medical knowledge is now growing and changing too fast for humans to keep up with, and the facts you memorize today might not be relevant five years from now,’ says NYU’s Dr. Triola.”

Additional Skills Needed

- Knowledge base
- Electronic Medical Record
- Considering a patient’s economic “big picture”
- Communication skills
- Engage patients as partners
- Teamwork
- Know LEAN (process improvement) and cost reduction strategies.

Individual Change

Why Physician Burnout Matters

Ways Physician Burnout Hurts

• Burnout can hurt clinical outcomes
• Harm patient perception of care
• Drives up an organization’s recruitment and retention costs
• Harms physician productivity
• Increases operating costs
• Makes episodes of incivility more likely
• Leads to malpractice litigation
• Blocks change initiatives
• “Compassion fatigue”
Does Burnout Matter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Errors</th>
<th>Medical Malpractice Suits</th>
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<th>Patient Compliance</th>
<th>Patient Satisfaction</th>
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Ways Physician Burnout Hurts

• Physician burnout *threatens patient safety*

8.9 percent of 7,905 American surgeons reported having committed a major medical error in the preceding three months. Many of these physicians manifested burnout.

* 2010 article in the Annals of Surgery, Shanafelt
Recognizing Physician Burnout

(Diagnosis)
Leading Indicators of Physician Burnout (not always easy to recognize)

- Disengagement
- Disinterest
- Disconnection

Burnout Symptoms

- A sense of creepingly cynical and lack of passion
- Depersonalization (treating patients and coworkers as objects) and emotional disengagement
- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Headaches
- Inability to concentrate
- Depression or anxiety
- Irritability
- Chronic complaining or blaming
- Explosions of anger on the job
- Insomnia
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Suicidal thoughts / behaviors

Diagnosing Physician Burnout

…and distinguishing from the disruptive physician

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<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Disruptive Physician</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Emotional exhaustion (blunted affect with absence of discretionary effort).</td>
<td>1. Use a combination of verbal and behavioral tactics to intimidate or derail team members.</td>
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<td>2. Depersonalization, especially of the patient.</td>
<td>2. Disparaging or derogatory toward staff.</td>
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<td>3. Belief that efforts no longer make a difference.</td>
<td>3. Believes that he or she is the only one doing it correctly.</td>
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We Are All in This Together: Tools and Tactics for Treating Physician Burnout

To Heal Physician Burnout

Physician Burnout

Organizational Responsibility

Individual Responsibility

Engagement
Healing Physician Burnout Tactics

Organizational Responsibility

Physician Burnout

Organizational Responsibility

Individual Responsibility

Engagement

Key drivers of Physician Engagement

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<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>Physicians want to know their patients are receiving quality care and a great patient experience.</th>
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<tr>
<td>EFFICIENCY</td>
<td>Physicians want to work with team members who have the information needed at hand to discuss their patients. Over the course of a day this efficiency will save the physician 30 minutes or more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>INPUT</td>
<td>Physicians need a seat at the table to provide input when decisions are being made that affect clinical outcomes. Round on physicians and consistently ask them, “Do you have everything you need to provide excellent care to your patient?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPRECIATION</td>
<td>Physicians value a “thank you” and acknowledgment when things are going well. They also want to see follow-up on their input in the form of tangible change.</td>
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Physicians “Must Haves” ®

• Involve Physicians in Goal Setting & Skill Building
• Round on Physicians
• Focus, Fix, Follow Up
• AIDET® (Enhanced Communication Skills)
• Reward & Recognize

Organizational Responsibility

How do other industries treat elite performers?
Johnny Cueto  #47 | SP

- Will perform once every 5 days
- 162 games per season
- Will pitch in about 30-35 games per year
- Will pitch on average 7 innings per game
Healing Physician Burnout Tactics
*Individual Responsibility*

- Work life
- Home life
- Emotional life
Take Care of Yourself at Work?

- Rethink work-life “balance”
- Take regular vacations
- See patients as “partners”
- Create a collaborative culture
- Own your training / professional development
- Share feelings / experiences

Physician - Heal Thyself
Take Care of Yourself at Home?

Do for yourself what you would advise others:

• Exercise, sleep, eat well
• Volunteer
• Cultivate hobbies
• Nurture relationships
• Prioritize

Take Care of Yours Emotional Being

• Manage stress
• Maintain self-awareness
• Practice mindfulness
• Count your blessings
## 2016 Physician Insight Series

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<td>George Ford, MD</td>
<td>January 20th, 2016</td>
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<td>Women in Medicine and Leadership: Work Life Blend and Preventing and Reversing Burnout</td>
<td>Barbara Roehl, MD, MBA</td>
<td>February 9th, 2016</td>
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<td>Burnt-Out or Discursive?</td>
<td>Rob Schreiner, MD</td>
<td>February 16th, 2016</td>
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<td>Burnout in Cancer Care: How Physician Leadership Can Make the Change</td>
<td>Ted James, MD, MS</td>
<td>February 23rd, 2016</td>
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<td>Dan Smith, MD, FACEP</td>
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<td>Five Things Physicians Need to be Fully Engaged</td>
<td>Rob Schreiner, MD</td>
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<td>Jason Ruda</td>
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<td>Burnout Among Physicians In-Training</td>
<td>Rob Schreiner, MD</td>
<td>March 22nd, 2016</td>
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<td>The Impact of Electronic Medical Records on Physician Burnout</td>
<td>Anthony Schuler, MD, MBA, CPE</td>
<td>March 29th, 2016</td>
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EVALUATION REMINDER:

We want your feedback to get better and so you can receive continuing education credits. Please evaluate the session.

Studer Conferences

Thank You!

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