Ways to Enhance Resilience and Prevent Burnout

Clinical Tool

This document has been written for clinicians. The content was developed by the Integrative Medicine Program, Department of Family Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health in cooperation with Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, under contract to the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, Veterans Health Administration.

Information is organized according to the diagram above, the Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being. While conventional treatments may be covered to some degree, the focus is on other areas of Whole Health that are less likely to be covered elsewhere and may be less familiar to most readers. There is no intention to dismiss what conventional care has to offer. Rather, you are encouraged to learn more about other approaches and how they may be used to complement conventional care. The ultimate decision to use a given approach should be based on many factors, including patient preferences, clinician comfort level, efficacy data, safety, and accessibility. No one approach is right for everyone; personalizing care is of fundamental importance.
In the educational overview focused on clinician self-care, several options for fostering resilience were offered. On the next page is an evidence-based list of suggestions related to what you can do to decrease burnout and foster resilience in your work. Some of these suggestions are general; others are much more specific. The list is presented on a separate page and in an easily-printable format so that you may display it in your office or share it with your colleagues.
Ways to Enhance Resilience and Prevent Burnout: Some Evidence-Based Suggestions

It is not uncommon for clinicians to need ideas on how to “get a boost” when their work feels challenging. Research has found the following suggestions to be helpful for preventing burnout and increasing clinician resilience.

**Attitudes and Perspectives**
- Find a sense of meaning related to the work you do
- Foster a sense of contribution
- Stay interested in your role
- Accept professional demands
- Come to terms with personal limitations (self-acceptance) and confront perfectionism
- Work with thinking patterns
- Develop a health philosophy for dealing with suffering and death
- Exercise self-compassion
- Give up the notion that you have to figure everything out
- Practice mindful awareness
- Interject creativity into work; consider an array of different therapeutic options, as appropriate
- Treat everyone you see as though they were sent to teach you something important
- Identify what energizes you and what drains you, seeking out the former

**Practice Management**
- Identify areas of work that are most personally meaningful (patient care, education, teaching, research, leadership, etc.) and shape your career accordingly
- Create a workplace environment that is as comfortable as it can be
- Stay organized at work
- Maintain a manageable workload (if only it were as easy said as done!)
- Make optimal use of electronic records
- Delegate appropriately
- Create a safe place for discussing medical errors with colleagues

**Supportive Relations**
- Seek and offer peer support
- Network with peers
- Find a supportive mentor
- See your own primary care clinician
- Consider having your own psychologist or counselor
- Nurture healthy family, friend, and partner relationships

**Balance and Priorities**
- Be aware of both personal and work goals
- Balance work life and home life effectively
- Set appropriate limits
- Maintain professional development
- Honor yourself
- Exercise
- Find time for recreation
- Take regular vacations
- Engage in community activities
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References