

BEYOND BURN-OUT – IN RESIDENCY AND LIFE

Thank you so much for inviting me to spend time with you this afternoon.

The topic for today is burn-out. Some of you are about to launch into various practice settings; some of you are still in the throes of residency. All of you have been hearing about burn-out since you were medical students, if not before. So this is one of those topics everybody knows everything about, like communication, but we keep returning to it because it is so much harder to solve than it appears.

So, let's start with what we know.

What is burn-out? (3 components)

Is burn-out common? So common that it is almost normative!

Are physicians in private practice protected?

Are younger or older physicians more susceptible?

How is burnout reflected in the practice of medicine?

Empathy, professionalism decrease

Prescribing more drugs, making more referrals, making more mistakes increase

Patients of doctors who are burned out are less adherent, less satisfied, less trust for docs

Personal costs of burn-out – depression, anxiety, divorce, alcohol and substance abuse, intent to leave practice, and SUICIDE

What are warning signs of burn-out?

What are sources of burn-out?

Time pressures; workload; insufficient resources

Bureaucratic burden

Lack of control over practice environment

Sleep deprivation

Problematic work relationships

Recurring exposure to emotionally intense experiences

Lack of motivated, grateful pts

Problems with work-life balance

Culture that denies physician's personal needs

Perfectionism

How to doctors who are burned-out start acting?

Can't outwait burn-out

Studies suggest the following are all protective factors against burn-out

Relationships (family, friends, and colleagues)

Religious beliefs/spiritual practices: meaning,

Life philosophy – optimistic outlook; values that matter; committed to balance

Self-care practices

Ways of appreciating, being renewed by everyday practice

Gratitude

Find something to make you smile, gives you joy; fills you with awe and wonder

Forgiving others and self

Reminding self of original ideals

Be actively involved with your healthcare system and work toward change

Night on Call – finding a moment of appreciation after being on call all night

Broyard quote – you may save yourself rather than pulling back from patients is to open your hearts to them