

## Professional Wellbeing and Burnout



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## Case Presentation

- 49 year old white male physician presents to colleague: “I can’t do this anymore! I have no energy for work.”
  - 20 years in community clinic
  - Difficulty going to work, clock watching
  - Sense of nothing left to give, futility
  - Guilty over growing resentment of patients
  - Minimal sense of accomplishment



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## Burn Out: Prevalent Stress Syndrome

- 3 main symptoms
  - Exhaustion
  - Detachment
  - Loss of satisfaction



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**Burn Out – Other Terms**

- Grief Syndrome – loss of ideals
- Compassion Fatigue
- Cynicism – pervasive negative lens to life
- Depletion of Positive Energy
- Addiction to Negativity



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**Burn Out**

- Prime factor in turnover, absenteeism, declining morale, and personal dysfunction
- Hope→Trigger for revitalization



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**Energy for work**

Continuum

Burn Out                      Enthusiasm



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### Malaise: Job Dissatisfaction in Health Care

- Epidemic of low morale
- Struggles, concerns, frustrations
- Hard to find minimal job satisfaction let alone VITALITY & ENTHUSIASM



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### Why?

- What do you think are the primary reasons that health care professionals burn out?



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### Causes

- Stress +
  - Lack of control – patients, systems
  - Suppression of emotion – too costly
  - Striving for perfection – sense of inadequacy
  - Workaholic tendency – boundaries



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### **In Other Words...Out of Balance**

The “three lies” we often live by:

- We are what we own
- We are what others say about us
- We are what we do for a living  
(Enantiadromia)



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### **My Story with a Traditional Healer**



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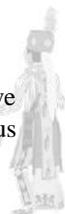
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### **Thesis**

- A solution to burnout is found in the Native American concept of wellness out of which enthusiasm is born.
- A “well” health care professional will maintain an enthusiastic commitment to service and have an abundance of positive energy needed to give relational care, thus experiencing a fulfilling career.



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### Wellness Defined

- When all aspects of our lives are in balance & harmony
- More than absence of disease or enjoying good health
- Reflected in behaviors & attitudes
- Authentic peace and joy



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### Wellness Circle

- Gift from Native community
- Four aspects of life
- When in balance & functioning at optimum
  - Physically fit
  - Mentally stimulated
  - Emotionally adjusted
  - Spiritually connected



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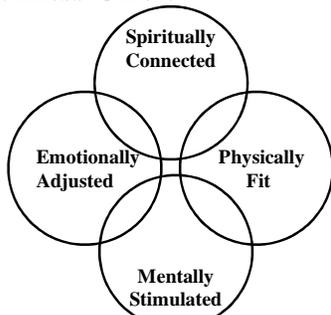
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### Wellness Circle



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### **Spirituality – The key**

- One's essence.
- Awake to a divine presence in all things
- Connected
- Awareness of a greater expansive reality
- Focuses on intangible
- Center of purpose and meaning



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### **Spirituality vs. Religion**

- Intertwined and related, but not equivalent
- Spirituality precedes religion
- Religion can be thought of as a bridge to spirituality
- Religion may enhance or hinder spirituality



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### **Spirituality**

- About belief systems involving mystery & faith
- Focuses on intangible elements
- Brings purpose & meaning
- Journey from ego to essence



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### Difficult for Health Care Professionals

- We have traveled the path of science
- Modern medical education chooses logical, analytical, and rational approaches
- We value the mind
- Our cultural tendency to deny mystery has left us spiritually undernourished & out of balance



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### Spiritual Assessment

- Do I have a sense of connection with the divine? With others?
- Do I have awe & reverence, yet a feeling of oneness with the Great Spirit?
- Do I live a life of trust?
- Am I called to service?



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### Analogy with Physical Fitness

- Exercise
- Good diet
- Avoiding bad habits



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**Exercise**

- Prayer/meditation – comparable activity in spiritual realm
- No spiritual power without daily discipline



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**Daily Practice of Meditation**

- Allowing silence to fill your mind
- Brings an increased sense of well being & energy
- Can build awe & awareness of divine presence working within us
- Changes one's neurochemical ecology



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**Relaxation Response**

- Repetitive activity shutting down the mind's busy chatter
- Physiologic shift to peace
- Opposite of fight/flight response
- Strengthens immune system, better sleep
- Lowers blood pressure and cortisol levels
- Move to a place of resonance



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## Healthy Diet

- How do we feed our spiritual lives?
  - Enjoying nature: hiking, gardening
  - Ceremonies
  - Church services
  - Reading inspirational/devotional material
  - Listening to music
- The key to to practice it regularly
- Common denominator - time



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## Avoiding Bad Habits

- Three habits block spiritual health & prevent connectedness
  - Complaining
  - Being resentful
  - Worrying



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## Complaining

- Easy & common – an initial reflex when things don't go the way we want
- Opposite of gratitude
- Difficult to trust or be open to divine will



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## Gratitude

- Induces a physiological state called resonance
- Associated with lower blood pressure and heart rate
- Significantly increases natural antibodies
- Promotes healing
- Shown to increase “happiness set point”



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## Resentment

- We have all been hurt & memories are long
- Easy to be critical of others – gossip
- We may hold a grudge or seek revenge
- Bitterness poisons the spirit & closes the heart
- Resentment blocks trust
- Opposite is forgiveness



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## Forgiveness

- A letting go of bitterness – a release that opens us to connectedness
- Not forgetting, condoning, excusing or reconciliation
- An act of the heart that brings peace of mind (decreasing depression, anger & stress hormones – resonance)
- People act out of the condition of their life



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**Worrying**

- Being troubled about something
- Carrying a core of anxiety – a heaviness
- Common in medical staff
- Opposite is peace of mind




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**Anxiety to Peace of Mind**

- Mindfulness – being in the moment
- Center and calm by breathing
- Prayer – Brings perspective
- Trust – ultimately it will be ok




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<b>Reactive Self</b>	<b>True Self</b>
Fear and Ego	Love and Wisdom
Complaining	Gratitude
Resentment	Forgiveness
Anxiety	Peace




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**The Secret**

- “It is only with the heart that one sees rightly for what is essential is invisible to the eye.”
- Our happiness & well-being ultimately are determined by our inner world



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**Inner Life as Change Agent**

- $S \rightarrow R$
- $S \triangleq R$



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**Descending “D”s**

- Difficulty/Disappointment – issue defined negatively
- Discouragement – what you focus on grows
- Disillusionment – loss of creative vision
- Depression – loss of joy
- Despair – loss of hope



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**Ascending “A”s**

- Awareness – nonjudgmental acceptance
- Appreciation – gratitude for opportunity
- Anticipation – vision
- Acclamation – excitement
- Achievement – successful resolution



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**The Happiness Set Point**

- Consistent measurement
- Can be elevated by events and circumstances
- BUT ONLY FOR A LIMITED TIME
- One attribute has been shown by research to elevate the happiness set point long term:
- GRATITUDE



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**So . . .**

- Commit to nourishing your own spirituality or inner life
  - Daily
  - Weekly



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