Self Care: What It Is and Why It Matters

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The Summer Day
Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean-
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up
and down-
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes
her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention,
how to fall down into the grass,
how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed,
how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?
“Sooner or later you have to come to grips with yourself. At the end of every road you meet yourself.”

“Human beings have an enormous variety of clever devices for running away from themselves ...”

“By middle life most of us are accomplished fugitives from ourselves.”

John W. Gardner
Reflect
Reassess
Restore
How can I be sure that I’ll be happy in my career?

How can I be sure that my relationships [with significant others] are an enduring source of happiness?

How can I be sure I’ll stay out of jail?

Clayton M. Christensen
Robert and Jane Cizik Professor of Business Administration
Harvard Business School
Elements of Wellness

Self/Significant others

Work/Life’s other parts

Values
“...for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.”

Francis Weld Peabody, MD

Lucy Candib, MD
Professor, Family Medicine and Community Health
UMass Medical School

“The secret of the care of the patient is caring for oneself while caring for the patient.”*

“...self-care is never a selfish act... it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have…”* 

Parker Palmer

“Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin, 
As self-neglecting”

Shakespeare: Henry V

Human Function Curve

Burnout:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Detachment
- Lack of personal achievement felt*

Christina Maslach
Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley.


maslach.socialpsychology.org
Conclusions: Burnout is more common among physicians than among other US workers. Physicians in specialties at the front line of care access seem to be a greatest risk.
The Phantom Limb of the Triple Aim

William M. Spinelli, MD, MPA

“…the efforts to improve contemporary health care focus on a triad of improving patient care quality, decreasing costs, and enhancing access.

Why hasn’t the well-being of those destined to deliver this care in a cost-effective manner been taken into account in the planning?”
Physician wellness: a missing quality indicator

Jean E Wallace, Jane B Lemaire, William A Ghali

When physicians are unwell, the performance of health-care systems can be suboptimum. Physician wellness might not only benefit the individual physician, it could also be vital to the delivery of high-quality health care. We review the work stresses faced by physicians, the barriers to attending to wellness, and the consequences of unwell physicians to the individual and to health-care systems. We show that health systems should routinely measure physician wellness, and discuss the challenges associated with implementation.

Introduction

“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.”

Sir Winston Churchill

Physicians are important citizens of health-care systems, and evidence indicates that many physicians are unwell. Physicians who are affected by the stresses of their work may go on to experience substance abuse, relationship troubles, depression, or even death. Results of emerging research show that physicians' stress, fatigue, burnout, depression, or general psychological distress negatively affects health-care systems and patient care. Thus when physicians are unwell, the performance of the health-care system can be suboptimum. The corollary is that physician wellness might not only benefit the individual physician, but also be vital to the delivery of high-quality health care.

Risk of physician ill health

Practising medicine is stressful to many physicians. For example, authors of a Canadian study reported that 64% of physicians feel that their workload is too heavy, and 48%...
Clinician Wellness

Personal & Professional Success

Health Care System

Better

Worse

Clinician Wellness

Performance of Health Care System

Resilience is the capacity to respond to stress in a healthy way such that goals are achieved at minimal psychological and physical cost...

Resilience depends on individual, community, and institutional factors.

Individual factors of resilience include the capacity for mindfulness, self-monitoring, limit setting and attitudes that promote constructive and healthy engagement with...challenges at work.”
Healthy Approaches to Stress*

- Self-care
- Self-awareness
- Sharing of feelings and responsibilities: protect your relationships
- Reframing and limit setting
- Developing a personal philosophy: live according to your values

*Information adapted from Quill TE, Williamson PR. Healthy Approaches to Physician Stress* Arch Intern Med. 1990; 150:1857-1861.
Self-Care

• Personal interests
• Exercise
• Regular health care
• Keep a journal
• Religious practice
• Continuing education outside medicine
• Meditation/yoga

Self-Care

http://www.mindtools.com/
Self-Care

“...the best thinking in the area of time management can be captured in a single phrase:

Organize and execute around priorities.”*

Overloaded Circuits

Why Smart People Underperform


by Edward M. Hallowell
Self-Care: Solitude

Self-Care: dangers of chemical coping
Self-Care

“The stigma of illness persists in the culture of medicine and serves as a barrier to the seeking of help by faculty members in need.”

Mamta Gautam, MD

Elements of Wellness

- Self/Significant others
- Work/Life’s other parts
- Values

Image credit: U.S. National Library of Medicine
“What dwells in man?
What is not given to man?
What do men live by?”

“I know now that people only seem to live when they care only for themselves, and that it is by love for others that they really live.”

*What Men Live By
Leo Tolstoy
“Be a good ancestor. Stand for something bigger than yourself. Add value to the Earth during your sojourn.”

Marion Wright Edelman
“What is it that you find most important in your life?”
Elements of Wellness

Self/Significant others

Work/Life’s other parts

Values
“Our first obligation must be to serve the good of those persons who seek our help and trust us to provide it.”

“Medicine is, at its center, a moral enterprise grounded in a covenant of trust... dedicated to something other than its own self-interest.”

Eight Practitioner Skills That Promote Healing Relationships*

Do the little thing
Take time
Be open and listen
Let the patient explain
Find something to like, to love
Remove barriers
Share authority
Be committed and trustworthy

Larry Churchill, Ph.D.
Professor of Medical Ethics
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Do the little things
On Small, Good Things in Medicine

Delese Wear, PhD, a Joseph Zarconi, MD b

In the end, the story’s elegance lies with [its imagery]...and with the recognition of our most elemental needs for comfort and nourishment—those “small good things” that sustain us.
Take time*

Parker Palmer

“What does it mean to listen to a voice before it is spoken?”

Be open and listen*

Listen to me
Come sit and listen
Hold my hand

Be open and listen
Let the patient explain*

Eight Practitioner Skills That Promote Healing Relationships*

Time

Frank Davidoff, MD
Editor

“And the sad truth is that our trillion-dollar medical care system seems to feel that time spent with patients is a luxury it simply can't afford.”
Find something to like, to love*

Richard B. Weinberg, M.D.
Professor Internal Medicine-Gastroenterology
at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.**


Physicians do not exist in abstract isolation—they are woven into the fabric of people’s lives. Their fundamental role in service to humanity is to wed expert knowledge to systems of thought.*

Remove barriers

“Mindful practitioners attend in a non-judgmental way to their own physical and mental processes during ordinary, everyday tasks.”*

Ronald Epstein, MD

The Patient-Centered Medical Home
A Systematic Review

George L. Jackson, PhD, MHA; Benjamin J. Powers, MD, MHS; Ranee Chatterjee, MD, MPH; Janet Prvu Bettger, ScD; Alex R. Kemper, MD, MPH, MS; Vic Hasselblad, PhD; Rowena J. Dolor, MD, MHS; R. Julian Irvine, MCM; Brooke L. Heidenfelder, PhD; Amy S. Kendrick, RN, MSN; Rebecca Gray, DPhil; and John W. Williams Jr., MD, MHS

Background: The patient-centered medical home (PCMH) describes mechanisms for organizing primary care to provide high-quality care across the full range of individuals’ health care needs. It is being widely implemented by provider organizations and third-party payers.

Purpose: To describe approaches for PCMH implementation and summarize evidence for effects on patient and staff experiences, process of care, and clinical and economic outcomes.

Data Sources: PubMed (through 6 December 2011), Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (through 29 June 2012).

Study Selection: English-language trials and longitudinal observational studies that met criteria for the PCMH, as defined by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and included populations with multiple conditions.

Data Extraction: Information on study design, populations, interventions, comparators, financial models, implementation methods, outcomes, and risk of bias were abstracted by 1 investigator and verified by another.

Data Synthesis: In 19 comparative studies, PCMH interventions had a small positive effect on patient experiences and small to moderate positive effects on the delivery of preventive care services (moderate strength of evidence). Staff experiences were also improved by a small to moderate degree (low strength of evidence). Evidence suggested a reduction in emergency department visits (risk ratio [RR], 0.81 [95% CI, 0.67 to 0.98]) but not in hospital admissions (RR, 0.96 [CI, 0.84 to 1.10]) in older adults (low strength of evidence). There was no evidence for overall cost savings.

Limitation: Systematic review is challenging because of a lack of consistent definitions and nomenclature for PCMH.

Conclusion: The PCMH holds promise for improving the experiences of patients and staff and potentially for improving care processes, but current evidence is insufficient to determine effects on clinical and most economic outcomes.


For author affiliations, see end of text.
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"...one who is a close reader of illness and a good critic of medicine, but a bit of a metaphysician too...one who is able to go beyond the science into the person... (able to) imagine the aloneness of the critically ill."

Anatole Broyard (1920 - 1990)
Eight Practitioner Skills That Promote Healing Relationships*

Do the little things
Take time
Be open and listen
Let the patient explain
Find something to like, to love
Remove barriers
Share authority
Be committed and trustworthy

Elements of Wellness

- Self/Significant others
- Work/Life’s other parts
- Values
...the world offers itself to your imagination...

Mary Oliver, Wild Geese
Elements of Wellness

Self/Significant others

Work/Life’s other parts

Values
“I can tell you that for renewal, a tough minded optimism is best...

Values live or die in everyday action.”*

John Gardner

Kindness

Nordstrom:
• the bag lady and the holiday gowns

“This is what we are here for: to serve and to be kind.”*

Kindness

“Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind, the second is to be kind, and the third is to be kind.”

Henry James
Kindness

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.”

*Albert Schweitzer, 1954.*

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Think out loud

Be kind

Stick to the basics

Daniel Federman, M.D.
“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.”

- Albert Einstein
Nourish your colleagues
“What do you think of Western civilization?” asked a reporter.

“I think it would be a good idea”, Gandhi answered.
Passion
Kindness
Curiosity
Affirmation
Humor
Passion
Identify And Act On Values

What aspects of your professional and personal lives bring you joy?

Organizations share responsibility for clinician wellness.
Organizational Interventions and Expected Impact on Well-Being*

Control
(Influence over work environment)

Order
(Efficient office design & high quality staff)

Meaning
(Satisfaction with clinical & human aspects of patient care)

Expected Impact on Well-Being:

↑Clinician satisfaction
↓Clinician burnout
↑Organizational health