

**STRESS, TRAUMA  
AND RESILIENCE:  
A WEBINAR  
DISCUSSION FOR  
HEALTHCARE  
PROVIDERS IN THE  
COVID-19 ERA**

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**“IT’S NOT A MATTER OF IF  
CLINICIANS ARE GOING TO  
EXPERIENCE TRAUMA WHILE  
PROVIDING CARE, BUT WHEN AND  
HOW OFTEN.”**

**-ALBERT WU, MD, MPH, JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH**

Dr.Wu coined the term, Second Victim, to describe health care providers who experience trauma while serving in their role at work.

Piszczor & Sims, 2020

DIFFERENT  
TYPES OF JOB  
STRESS IMPACTS

- Burnout (not trauma specific)
- Crisis Responses (short term impacts)
- Trauma Responses (long term impacts)

# BURNOUT

- Burnout is characterized by a pattern of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (feeling really disconnected), and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).
- Burnout is not a trauma specific concept, but is pertinent to COVID-19.
- Conditions that have been found to contribute to burnout in physicians (Sanchez-Reilly et al., 2013):
  - Work overload
  - Insufficient resources
  - Lack of control over work environment
  - Majority of time spent on tasks that are not in sync with career goals
  - High level of work-home interference



## NORMAL RESPONSES TO CRISES



Physiological functioning (e.g., exhaustion, muscle tension, headaches, difficulty sleeping)



Cognitive functioning (e.g, difficulty with attention and decision making, memory difficulty)



Emotional functioning (e.g., anxiety, tearfulness, guilt, numbness, grief, denial, symptoms of depression, anger)

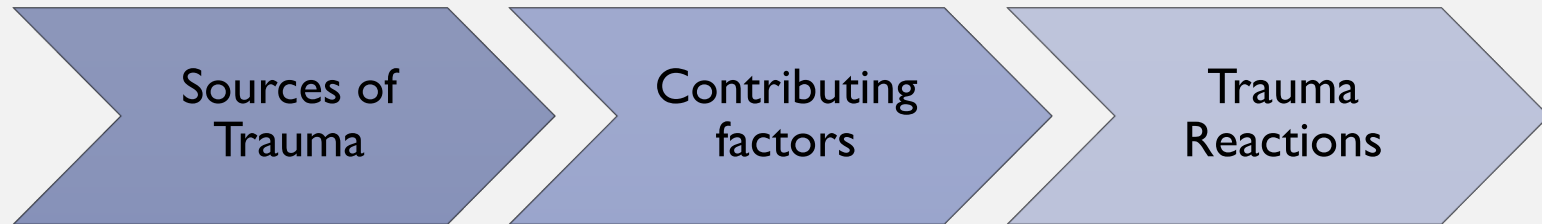


Relationship functioning (e.g., withdrawal from others, changes in sexual drive)



Spiritual (e.g., questions about faith)

# POTENTIAL TRAUMA IN HEALTHCARE-COVID 19



Increased rates of patient deaths  
Personal loss & concerns  
Compassion fatigue  
Collective uncertainty

- Heavy workload
- Long hours
- Disrupted sleep
- Isolation
- Job role shift
- Inability to help regular patients
- Ethical tension of societal vs. personal needs

- Pathological Reactions (e.g., PTSD)
- Invulnerable Reactions (e.g., no change)
- Resilient Reactions (e.g., bend but do not break)
- Growth Reactions (e.g, Post-Traumatic Growth)



Piszczor & Sims, 2020

## THE OVERFLOW...

Beacham et al. (2020)

NOW FOR SOME  
GOOD NEWS....





...Most people who experience adversity and trauma will **NOT** be significantly impacted in the long term....

# RESILIENCY

In the face of adversity...you bend, but do not break. Once the adversity passes, you return to your normal functioning.



POST TRAUMATIC  
GROWTH  
(TEDESCHI &  
CALLOUN, 2004)

## PTG is different from resiliency

Resiliency is adaptive focused

PTG highlights improved vs. adaptive functioning

While with resiliency our “tree” comes back to its normal shape “pre-storm,” with PTG, our “tree” develops into a new, more powerful shape, better able to weather storms to come.

## PTG can lead to positive change in:

Relating to others

New possibilities

Personal strengths

Spiritual change

Appreciation of life

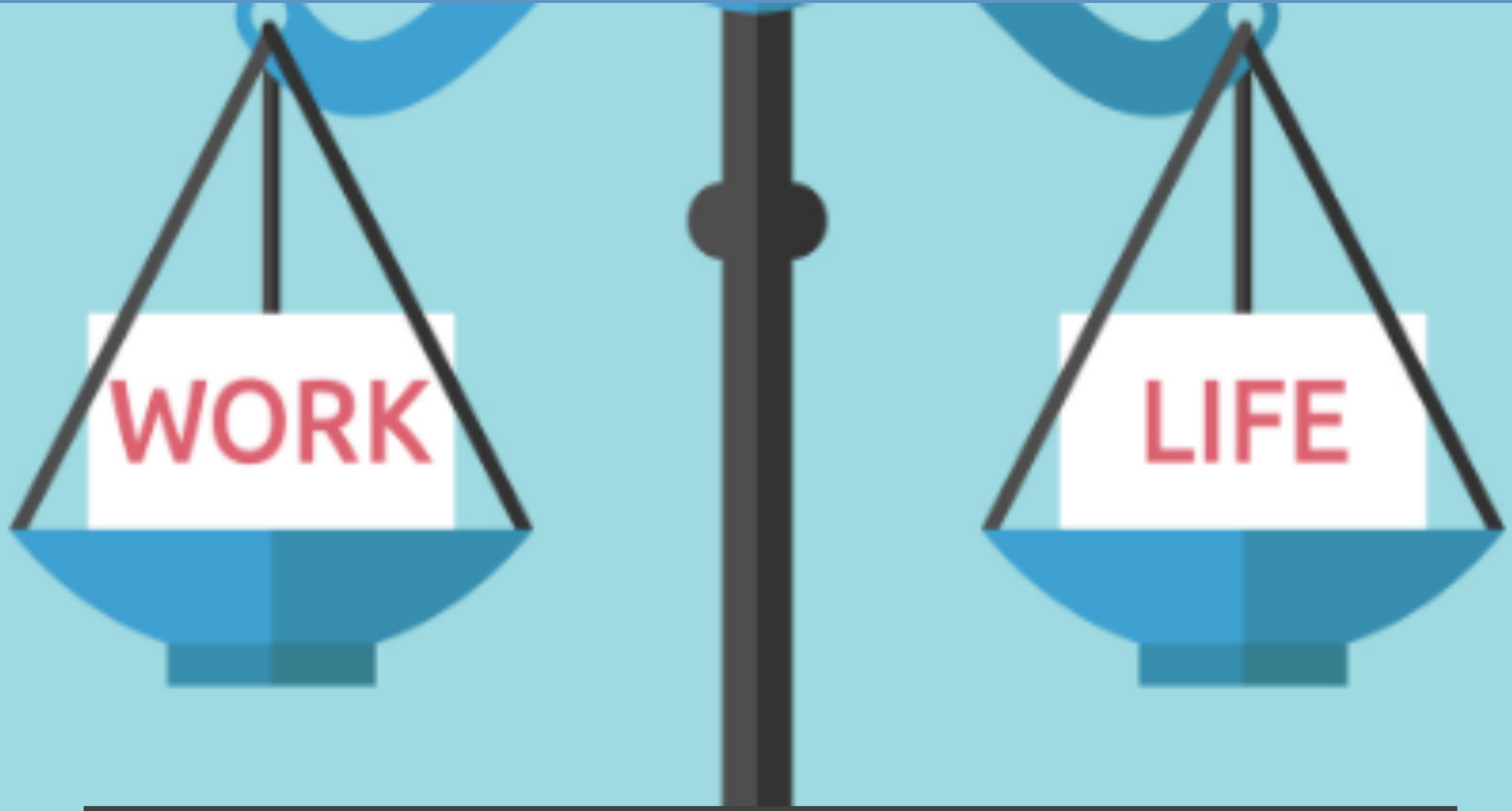
# WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

Coping and Prevention

## TWO MAIN GOALS FOR YOURSELF

- **First goal:** to cope with the stress of the current situation.
  - Stress-management
  - Needs-based focused
- **Second goal:** to prevent long-lasting psychological impacts as a result of the pandemic.
  - Understand and watch out for the “flags” or signs of trouble
  - Get help when needed.

STEP ONE:  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
& SELF-COMPASSION



**UNDERSTAND THE MYTH  
OF WORK/LIFE BALANCE**

**...No one told us this wasn't achievable?!?!??**

## THE MYTH OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

- According to Beacham and colleagues (2020), there is no such thing as achieving a true work life “balance.”
- The idea that one can achieve a true balance perpetuates stress and negative personal beliefs.
  - We constantly feel as if we are “failing” in this regard!
- Dr. Beacham introduces us to a new model...not a scale in perfect balance, but instead...meet the work-life....





## WORK-LIFE WOBBLE BOARD!!

You are constantly working to find your balance, but often are “wobbling” around as you work to find stability!!!

- **Important Considerations:**
  - Acceptance that true “balance” is likely not achievable.
  - The feeling of “wobble” or of constant shifting of priorities is normal.
  - The understanding that just as with the wobble board, **practice, training, and effort** can help you to learn to find moments of stability. Use of your “core” management techniques will allow you to thrive through the wobble.



WORK-  
LIFE  
WOBBLE  
BOARD



HOW DOES THIS APPLY  
TO THE PANDEMIC?

- If normal life is a wobble board, then the wobble has certainly intensified now!!
- What core management strategies have worked for you in the past to help stabilize or cope?
- Need to put “mindful attention” toward the work of stabilizing.

# STEP 2: CORE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES- COPING

# USE STRATEGIES THAT WORK

- Use strategies that have worked for you in the past.
- Use strategies that research has proven to be helpful.
  - As one example, mindfulness-based stress reduction training has been found effective in promoting wellness in healthcare providers (e.g., Goodman & Schorling, 2012; Shapiro et al., 2005)
- How can you put this into practice right now?
  - Understanding that mindfulness CAN be practiced even in times of great burden. Avoid viewing it from an all or none perspective.
  - Apps: Headspace
  - Headspace is one of the few apps with evidence that supports its effectiveness (Howells et al., 2017)
    - Use of headspace App has been found to increase happiness and reduce symptoms of depression.

## SPECIFIC STRATEGIES



Get support from those in your life



Discuss the experience with colleagues and trusted friends/family



Be mindful of “avoidance”-allow for time to feel even when uncomfortable



Use positive emotion and laughter



Meaning making



Helping others to heal



Shift how you view your ability to cope:

“this is hard and seems impossible, but I can get through it,” VS

“this is hard and is impossible, I won’t be able to get through it.”

## RE-CONCEPTUALIZE SELF-CARE

No matter how little time you have to give to yourself, it is critical to practice self-compassion.

Take 15 minutes each morning to: meditate, stretch, or do a few yoga poses.

Take time each day for lunch, and allow the focus to shift away from work

Allow yourself a “relaxing transition” back into your home following a long day at work.

Journal for 10-20 minutes each day when you return home to help process your experiences for the day.

Include a “winding down hour,” before you get into bed.

# COPING WITH ISOLATION



# YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE

- Research consistently highlights the importance of communication and social support as a buffer against stress and burnout (Bonanno, 2004; Burton, Cooper, Feeny, & Zoellner, 2015; Greenberg et al., 2020; Kisely et al., 2020).
- Try to connect with someone each day (e.g., a family member, friend, or colleague).
- Focus on and apply mindful attention to the connections you make throughout the day.
- Ask yourself, "where am I putting my focus?"



## WHAT TO WATCH FOR

While most individuals will show resilience in the face of the pandemic, a sub-group will develop longer-lasting symptoms and will need help and support.



Need to be aware of signs that you may be developing a more significant problem, such as:

Depressive Disorder

Anxiety Disorder

Insomnia Disorder

Substance Use Disorder

# WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

- Things to watch for:
  - You are not feeling better 6 weeks or more after the end of the pandemic
  - You are having trouble functioning at home or at work
  - You are experiencing frightening dreams, memories of traumatic experiences
  - You are having an increasingly hard time connecting with others
  - You are drinking more and having difficulty avoiding using
  - You are experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm
  - You are having consistent troubles falling asleep or staying asleep (no longer just occasional)
  - You feel as if you are always “on edge”

## RESOURCES

- **Apps:**
  - Calm.com
  - Headspace.com
- **Therapy:**
  - Call insurers to find out what your benefits are for mental health. Aetna and BCBS are reported to be waiving copays for tele-health visits.
  - Search provider directory for insurers to find someone who takes your insurance.
  - Psychology Today, a website, has a good provider search to find a therapist in your area-can search using different criteria (e.g, sex, degree, specialty area)  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- **Crisis Needs:**
  - Text CRISIS to 741741-will receive a response from a crisis worker
  - National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

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