These Brightly Colored Threads: Lessons learned from the pandemic

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Presenter Disclosure

Presenter: Françoise Mathieu

Relationships with commercial interests:
• Executive Director of TEND Academy Ltd.

Potential for conflict(s) of interest:
• We provide consulting services to healthcare organizations on burnout, compassion fatigue and organizational health.

We will discuss

• Key psychological impacts of the pandemic on healthcare professionals
• Is it too soon for post-traumatic growth?
• How to apply the key tenets of compassionate care
This is where I live

Key psychological impacts of the pandemic
Physicians with <5 years in practice more likely to experience burnout and have low resilience. Hospital-based physicians had increased odds of lower emotional, social and psychological well-being. Over 80% said they were aware of available physician health program, but only 15% had accessed them. Main barriers:

- believed the situation was not severe enough
- being ashamed to seek help
- not being aware of the services available

New US Consensus Study Report on Physician Burnout
Released October 2019
The Myth of the “Great Resignation”

www.tendacademy.ca/we-need-to-talk

Re-evaluation
The “Great Resignation?”

Self-preservation
The “Great Resignation?”
“When we are in the middle of significant change, business as usual is a myth.

The expectations leaders were putting on themselves and others were completely unsustainable, and the reason burnout spread quickly.”


- 30 days of hypervigilance typically followed by complacency.

“In combat situations, that’s when people start getting careless and make mistakes and get hurt.”

Lt. Col (ret) Stéphane Grenier
The six causes of burnout:

1. Workload
2. Perceived lack of control
3. Lack of reward or recognition
4. Poor relationships
5. Lack of fairness
6. Values mismatch
Using the term “burnout” as an umbrella term in healthcare is a mistake

Contributing and/or Protective Factors

- Personal vulnerabilities
- Socio-cultural context
- Working conditions
- System challenges
- Work related grief and loss
- Direct exposure
- Indirect trauma

Chapter 20
Managing Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Moral Distress
Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) is a shift in priorities after a traumatic experience, where simple aspects of life are more appreciated [...] or where individuals make decisions to alter the priorities of their lives.

“Pandemic Amnesia”

“After each pandemic, there’s a tension between [...] needing to pass these stories on and needing the victims to be remembered;

and [...] a very understandable, basic need to move on with our lives [...].”

- Olivia Humphreys

“Trauma is not about the event but how the trauma impacts us and overwhelms our ability to cope and adapt.”


“I’m fine, I’m fine.”

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Is it too soon for lessons learned?

Post-Traumatic Growth
"The first condition to experience PTG is that the traumatic event needs to be over."
- Diana Tikasz

Post-Traumatic Growth

How to apply the key tenets of compassionate care
Redeployments
and mutual appreciation
Compassion can be learned

“Several weeks of regular compassion training can have a beneficial impact on self-reported feelings of positive affect, personal resources, and well-being during everyday life.”

- Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, UNC Chapel Hill

Loving Kindness Meditation

Why does it work?
“40 seconds of compassion”

Research on Career-sustaining behaviours

*Individual-level protective factors for increasing compassion satisfaction and mitigating symptoms of STS and burnout included having a strong social support system outside of work and the frequent use of positive coping mechanisms.

Brady et al (2017)

"With everything that is going on, now needs to be about people.

We will get through this and, when we do, people will not remember what was done - but how it was done."

- Karen Davies, Certified Aviation Manager

"[…] One of the most useful things that people can do is be intentional on a review […] And, some people will do that, some people won’t"

- Dr. Bruce Perry
"...Instead of viewing the pandemic experience as one thing, I would encourage people to start to dissect out the strands of this tapestry.

Dr. Bruce Perry
Source: CPHO Shooting Yourself in the Foot, 2020, page 27

What are these brightly colored threads that actually are little things that we should carry forward?

What are the things that we don't want to carry forward?

And what did we learn?"

Dr. Bruce Perry
Source: CPHO Shooting Yourself in the Foot, 2020, page 27

THE FIVE Rs

- REST
- RECALIBRATE
- REPAIR
- REBUILD
- RE-ASSESS
“Quiet the mind, tend to the world”

Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky