

Healthcare provider burnout in acute and critical care

Nycole Oliver, DNP, APRN, RN, FNP-C,
ACNPC-AG, CEN, FAEN

Nycole.Oliver@yahoo.com

Disclosures

I have NO financial relationships or
conflicts of interest

Learning Objectives

- Define compassion fatigue and burnout, and discuss the symptoms.
- Illustrate approaches of the nurse practitioner when dealing with compassion fatigue and burnout in the acute care setting.
- Identify approaches for managing compassion fatigue and burnout.

Statistics

- The United States is #1 of the top ten active countries in publishing documents on burnout and compassion fatigue among healthcare providers.
- Burnout numbers among healthcare providers in the United States range from 35-60%.
- Societal costs attributed to burnout are approximately \$4.6 billion each year.
- Clinicians with burnout are twice as likely to leave their job and five times as likely to leave healthcare altogether.
- In 2019, the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) published a report, *Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being*, which recommended healthcare organizations identify and examine burnout among healthcare providers and hold leaders responsible for the health of their organization's work environment in an effort to reduce burnout and promote well-being.

National Academy of Medicine (2019); Sweileh
(2020); Wilkinson et al. (2017)

Human Giver Syndrome: The Real Reason We Are so Tired

- The belief that you have a moral obligation to give your time, attention, and affection in support of others even when that is to your own detriment.
- Philosopher Kate Manne “Human beings” vs. “Human givers”
- “Human beings” have a moral obligation to *be* or *express* their humanity, while “human givers” have a moral obligation to *give* their humanity to the “human beings”.
- Guess which one we are??

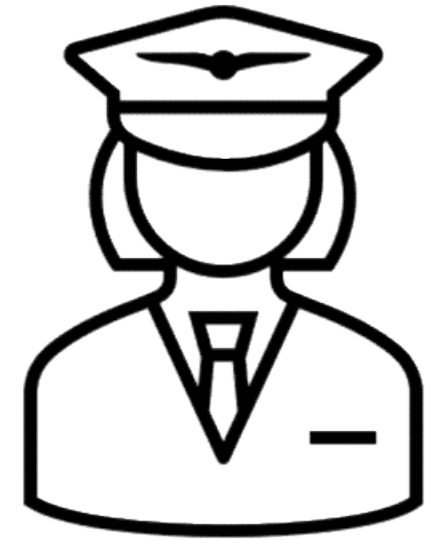
Nagoski et al. (2019)

Human Giver Syndrome cont.

- “Human givers’” role is to give their whole humanity to the “beings”
- Must, at all times, be *pretty, happy, calm, generous, and attentive to the needs of others*
- Must never be *ugly, angry, upset, ambitious, or attentive to their own needs*
- Not supposed to need anything
- This is slowly killing us!
- Why do you think we keep trying mindfulness and green smoothies and self-care trend after self-care trend?
- Our instincts for self-preservation are battling “Human Giver Syndrome” , which insists that self-preservation is *SELFISH*

Nagoski et al. (2019)

- There's a reason why airline attendants always instruct us that, in the case of emergency, we'll be most able to help others if we secure our own oxygen masks first.
- Not because we're selfish, but because that is how we're going to be at our best and most effective.



Khidekel (2021)

Effects of Burnout and Compassion Fatigue (CF)

- Personal Costs:
 - Physical illness
 - Increased feelings of hopelessness
 - Irritability
 - Impatience
 - Poor interpersonal relationships with family/co-workers/patients
 - Diminished executive functioning
 - Diminished attention
 - Diminished memory
 - Drug abuse
 - Suicidality

Mind Garden (2019); Tawfik et al., (2019)

Effects of Burnout and CF cont.

- Organizational Costs:
 - Absenteeism
 - Increased turnover
 - Decreased job performance
 - Increased risk to patient safety
 - Low satisfaction
 - Decreased quality of care
 - Self-reported medical errors
 - Increased patient mortality
 - Clinician depression
 - Financial costs to healthcare system

Lambden et al., (2019); Mind Garden (2019);
Tawfik et al., (2019)

Compassion Fatigue(CF) definition

- “A state of physical or psychological distress in caregivers, which occurs as a consequence of an ongoing and snowballing process in a demanding relationship with needy individuals”
- CF was first studied in the 1980s and was actually described as a natural and disruptive by-product of working with traumatized and troubled clients.
- Today, CF is more accurately defined as a loss of ability to empathize and provide compassionate care to patients.
- CF and burnout are often used interchangeably but tend to go hand in hand.

Figley (1995); Lyell (2020); Sweileh (2020)

Burnout definition

- “An emotional and behavioral impairment in response to the prolonged and high level of exposure to occupational stress”
- The term *burnout* was coined in 1975 by Herbert Freudenberger, and is defined by 3 components:
 1. *Emotional exhaustion*- the fatigue that comes from caring too much, for too long.
 2. *Depersonalization*- the depletion of empathy, caring, and compassion.
 3. *Decreased sense of accomplishment*- an unconquerable sense of futility: feeling that nothing you do makes any difference.

Freudenberger (1975); Maslach et al., (2001);
Nagoski et al., (2019); Sweileh (2020)

Compassion Fatigue(CF) symptoms

- Avoidance or dread of working with certain patients or patient types
- **Reduced ability to feel empathy toward patients or families**
- Impaired focus
- **Decreased sense of purpose**
- **Chronic fatigue**
- Muscle tension
- **Sleep disturbances**
- Frequent and lingering illness
- **Irritability**
- Anger and resentment
- **Depression**
- Detached or disinterested

Lyell (2020)

Burnout symptoms

- Headache
- **Fatigue**
- GI complaints
- **Muscle strain and tightness**
- Sleep disorders
- **Anxiety**
- Irritability
- **Thinking about quitting**
- Inefficiency on the job
- **Decreased satisfaction with the job**
- Lack of dedication to the job

Lyell (2020)

Recognizing CF and Burnout

- Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalization
 - Personal accomplishment
- Areas of Worklife Survey
 - Workload
 - Control
 - Reward
 - Community
 - Fairness
 - Values
- Pandemic Experiences & Perceptions Survey

Mind Garden (2019)

Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel

- Emotional exhaustion
 - Emotionally drained
 - Fatigued in the morning
 - Frustrated
 - Stress
 - End of my rope
- Depersonalization
 - Callous
 - Emotional hardening
 - I don't really care
- Personal accomplishment
 - Positively influencing
 - Accomplished
 - Energetic

Mind Garden (2019)

Areas of Worklife Survey

- Workload- the extent to which work demands spill into personal life, social pressures, and the physical and intellectual burden of job demands.
- Control- your participation in important decisions about your work as well as your range of professional autonomy.
- Reward- includes praise, awards, perks, and salary.
- Community- quality of the social context in which you work, encompassing your relationships with managers, colleagues, subordinates, and patients.
- Fairness- the extent to which the organization has consistent and equitable rules for everyone, or the quality of justice and respect at work.
- Values – the consistency between the personal values you bring to your profession and the values inherent in the organization where you work.

Mind Garden (2019)

Pandemic Experiences and Perceptions Survey

- Disruption- extent of workflow disruption
- Resources- to what extent were key resources adequate to meet demands
- Risk perception- to what extent did employees feel at risk. What contributed to risk perceptions: contact, control, potential harm
- Impact on worklife areas- workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values congruence
- Perceptions of leadership- including overall leadership and immediate manager
- Open-text items- identifying what would help employees now and what gives them hope

Mind Garden (2019)

Managing CF and Burnout

- “Microsteps” developed by Arianna Huffington via Thrive Global
- Tiny, science-based actions you can start taking right away to build habits that significantly improve your life.
- 45% of our everyday actions are made up of habits.
- Change your habits and change your life.
- Most of us start off too big!
- With minimal time and effort, you can seamlessly integrate Microsteps into your days, with immediate benefits for your well-being, resilience, focus, relationships, and sense of purpose.
- Over time, the results can add up.

Khidekal (2021)

Microsteps

Microsteps

- Sleep
- Unplugging and Recharging
- Nutrition and Hydration
- Movement
- Focus and Prioritization
- Communication and Relationships
- Creativity and Inspiration
- Purpose and Meaning

Khidekel (2021)

Sleep

- Before bed, escort your devices out of your bedroom.
- Set an alarm for 30 minutes before your bedtime.
- Set a daily caffeine cutoff.
- Conduct a sleep audit.
- Rid your bedroom of unwanted noise.
- Keep your bedroom cool (between 65-69°)
- Wear dedicated sleepwear to bed.
- Before you go to sleep, take 60 seconds to write down a list of 3 things you need to do tomorrow.

Khidekel (2021)

Unplugging and Recharging

- When you wake up, don't start your day by looking at your phone.
- Turn off all notifications, except from those who need to reach you.
- Schedule time on your calendar for something that matters to you- outside of work.
- Put away your phone and look up while commuting or running errands.
- Don't look at your phone during mealtimes.
- Put your phone away each time you socialize with friends or family.
- Delete one social media app from your phone.
- When you take PTO, shut off your email, Calendar, and chat notifications.

Khidekel (2021)

Nutrition and Hydration

- Swap a healthy treat for your go-to sugary comfort food.
- Swap one sugary beverage a day with water.
- Sit down when you eat, even for a few minutes.
- Drink a glass of water when you wake up in the morning.
- Keep a reusable water bottle at your desk and fill it each time you get up to use the restroom.
- Schedule an afternoon water break.
- Restore your energy and maintain hydration through the day by eating water-rich foods.
- Bring your lunch to work, even just once a week.

Khidekel (2021)

Movement

- Schedule time on your calendar for exercise.
- Take a one-minute stretch break whenever you can throughout the day.
- Find one moment to sneak some extra steps into your daily routine.
- Every time you brush your teeth, do a few squats.
- Build recovery time into your day.
- Once a day, take a short walk and focus on your breathing.
- Once a day, turn a sit-down meeting into a walking meeting.
- Whenever a call ends early, or when you get up to use the restroom, take an extra 2 minutes for a stretch break.

Khidekel (2021)

Focus and Prioritization

- In the morning, write down your priorities for the day.
- Take a minute to block off time for focused work today- ideally in the morning.
- If something takes less than 2 minutes, do it immediately.
- Make at least one meeting each day device-free.
- At the start of every virtual meeting, close out any chat programs or email windows.
- Set time on your calendar to manage your email each day.
- Log off from remote work at the same time you typically leave the office.
- Let go of something today that you no longer need.
- Once a day, schedule time for deep work and let others know.

Khidekel (2021)

Communication and Relationships

- During your day make a personal connection with people you might normally tend to pass by and take for granted.
- Start your next conversation with a question about the other person.
- Ask a trusted friend for their compassionately direct feedback.
- Once a day, have a conversation where you mostly listen.
- Next time you're tempted to criticize someone else, pause for one breath to reflect before you speak.
- Each week, schedule some one-on-one time with your partner.
- The next time you connect with a colleague, swap "How are you" for a deeper question.
- Ask someone with a different perspective for feedback on a project you're working on.

Khidekel (2021)

Creativity and Inspiration

- Schedule time to go outside.
- Take short pauses throughout the day.
- Take a planned detour.
- Add a short story or novel to your reading list.
- Plan a visit to your local museum or art gallery.
- Declare an end to the day, even if you haven't completed everything.
- Let yourself be bored.
- Take a moment to look up next time you step outside.

Khidekel (2021)

Purpose and Meaning

- Pick a time each day to compliment a co-worker on a job well done.
- Listen to your intuition.
- Focus on the rising and falling of your breath for 10 seconds.
- Say thank you.
- Use a skill or talent you have to help someone who could benefit from it.
- After completing a project, write an e-mail thanking a colleague (or your whole team) for their support.
- Give credit where it's due.
- Take advantage of moments of micro-rest.

Khidekel (2021)

Nycole's tips

Nycole's Microsteps

- Say “No” at least once per day.
- Set “Do not disturb” at a certain time each day.
- Every Monday, check on someone.
- Take a full day off work at least once every other month.
- Go to at least one conference per year.
- Use your PTO and CME!
- Set boundaries!
- Schedule time to exercise.
- Keep healthy snacks in your bag/at your desk.
- Every day before you leave, check your calendar for the next day.
- Purge e-mail once a month.

Conclusion

- Compassion fatigue and burnout are prevalent among acute care Nurse Practitioners.
- Awareness and self-reflection are important in recognizing this in yourself and/or your co-workers so it can be dealt with properly.
- Taking microsteps in the areas of sleep, unplugging and recharging, nutrition and hydration, movement, focus and prioritization, communication and relationships, creativity and inspiration, and purpose and meaning can significantly improve your health, relationships, and work, significantly decreasing burnout.

Thank you!

References

- Freudenberger, H. J. (1975). The staff burn-out syndrome in alternative institutions. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, & Practice*, 12(1), 73-82. doi:10.1037/h0086411
- Khidekel, M. (2021). *Your time to thrive: End burnout, increase well-being, and unlock your full potential with the new science of microsteps*. Hachette Books: New York.
- Lambden, J.P., Chamberlin, P., Kozlov, E., Lief, L., Berlin, D.A., Pelissier, L.A., ... Prigerson, H.G. (2019). Association of perceived futile or potentially inappropriate care with burnout and thoughts of quitting among health-care providers. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*, 36(3), 200-206. doi:10.1177/1049909118792517

References cont.

- Lyell, C. A. (2020). Psychosocial aspects of trauma care. In Emergency Nurses Association, Trauma Nursing Core Course (8th ed.). Jones & Bartlett.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397-422. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397
- Mind Garden. (2019). Physician Burnout Solutions. Retrieved from <https://www.mindgarden.com/content/34-physician-burnout-solutions>
- Nagoski, E. & Nagoski, A. (2019). *Burnout: The secret to unlocking the stress cycle*. Ballantine Books: New York.

References cont.

- National Academy of Medicine. (2019). Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being. The National Academies Press: Washington DC.
- Sweileh, W.M. (2020). Research trends and scientific analysis of publications on burnout and compassion fatigue among healthcare providers. *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology*, 15(23) 1-10. doi:10.1186/s12995-020-00274-z
- Tawfik, D. S., Scheid, A., Profit, J., Shanafelt, T., Trockel, M., Adair, K. C., ... Loannidos, J. P. A. (2019). Evidence relating healthcare provider burnout and quality of care: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 171(8), 555-567. doi:10.7326/M19-1152