


## An Exploration of NP Occupational Distress

July 22, 2022  
10-11:30




**School of Wellness**  
Revolutionizing Self-Care

Eileen T. O'Grady PhD, NP-BC  
Certified Nurse Practitioner and Wellness Coach  
www.eileenogrady.net

### DISCLOSURE AND OBJECTIVES

- Eileen T. O'Grady PhD, NP-BC has no financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose
- Explore the continuum of clinician over deployment
- Review of the evidence on human flourishing
- Summarize select organizational approaches to promote clinician wellbeing.




**School of Wellness**  
Revolutionizing Self-Care

## Professional Wellbeing and Resiliency

### Resilience


ability of a person's community system to withstand, adapt, recover, rebound or even grow from adversity, trauma, or stress.



**School of Wellness**  
Revolutionizing Self-Care

### Physical Findings of Sustained Stress Response

- Thinning of prefrontal cortex
  - brain fog, quality of decision making
  - lowered fine motor control
- Enlarges amygdala...Increases reactivity to stress
- Hippocampus shrinks = short-term memory then long term




**School of Wellness**  
Revolutionizing Self-Care

### Three conditions for High Stress

- High uncertainty
- Low sense of control
- Stakes seem high

### System Solutions are Required




**System Factors**

- Long Hours
- Under-resourced
- EMR
- High Acuity & Demand
- Uptick in incivility
- Disregard for expertise
- Lack a culture of wellness

**Individual Factors**

- Sleep/Real Food
- Movement/Nurturing
- Relationships



**School of Wellness**  
Revolutionizing Self-Care

### Three Components of Over-deployment (Burnout)

- Exhaustion**
  - Immense emotional, physical and/or cognitive fatigue
- Cynicism**
  - Low levels of job engagement
- Inefficacy**
  - A lack of productivity and feelings of incompetence

Jimenez, JM. (2021) *The Burnout Fix: Overcome Overtiredness, Beat Burnout, and Sustain Success in the New World of Work*. McGraw Hill.

### Clinician Burnout Demands Urgency

- Errors
- More depressed/ anxious
- Substance abuse
- Higher suicide rates
- Lowered patient satisfaction
- Higher absenteeism AND Presenteeism
- High turnover
- ANGER

Bernadette Melnyk, PhD, APRN-CNP, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN  
 Vice President for Health Promotion, University Chief Wellness Officer  
 Clinician Burnout Demands Urgent Action to Improve Population Health and Ensure Healthcare Quality and Safety. *QSE.edu*. 9/16/2020.

### Presenteeism: the lost productivity when employees are **not fully functioning** in the workplace (**disengaged or unwell**).

**\$4.6 Billion in Health Care**

**Full Cost Of Poor Health To Employers**

- 30% Personal Health Costs (Medical care, Pharmaceutical costs)
- 70% Health-Related Lost Productivity Costs (Presenteeism, Absenteeism)

### System Solutions are Required

**System Factors** (Red circle): Long Shifts, Under-resourced, EMR, High Acuity & Demand, Uptick in incivility, Disregard for expertise, Lack a culture of wellness.

**Individual Factors** (Green circle): Sleep/Real Food/Movement/Nurturing Relationships.

**= ANGER**

### Anger: Follow to its Source

- Informative and valid, easily seen and felt
- Stems from powerlessness
- Can feel protective or protecting
  - that we deeply care about/want to protect
  - what we belong to
  - our ideals being harmed
- The Purest form of care

### Constructive Anger

- Focused, wise action to protect what you value
- Attempts to reduce suffering in self or others

### Destructive Anger

- Tears down, spiteful
- Disregards wellbeing of others
- Attempts to control others

**Hyper-arousal Zone**

- Obsessive thoughts      Impulsive
- Defensive
- Anger Rage

**Optimal Arousal Zone**

- Think and feel together      Open and Curious
- Empathic
- Feelings are tolerable      Set Healthy Boundaries

**Hypo-arousal Zone**

- No Energy
- Checked out      Ashamed
- Passive/Can't say no

School of Wellness

**Aggression**  
**Always Pain Underneath**

**Surface (Visible):**

- Fear
- Disrespect
- Frustrations
- Insecurity
- Betrayal
- Shame
- Physical discomfort

**Underneath (Hidden):**

- Physical trauma
- Loneliness
- Alienation
- Low Self Worth
- Despair
- Rejection

The Peace Literacy Institute. <https://www.peaceliteracy.org>

School of Wellness  
 Revolutionizing Self-Care

**Trauma Literacy**  
**Non-Physical needs**

Purpose and Meaning    Nurturing relationships    Explanations    Expression    Inspiration    Belonging    Self-Worth    Challenge

The Peace Literacy Institute. <https://www.peaceliteracy.org>

School of Wellness  
 Revolutionizing Self-Care

**Drama Triangles**

3 Flavors of Victims

- Drama: repeating patterns of reactivity
- Lacks reasoning
- Fused to being right

**THE DRAMA TRIANGLE**

- Villain** (top): Blames
- Hero** (left): Provides temporary relief
- Victim** (right): Disempowered

Rubetsjok, P.E., M.B.A., Ph.D., Carl V. "Family Systems & Marriage, Brown Theory" (PDF). <https://www.familytherapy.com>

**A Safe Harbor Allows Exploration**

School of Wellness  
 Revolutionizing Self-Care

**Old Maslow**

- Self-actualization (desire to become the most that one can be)
- Esteem (respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom)
- Love and belonging (friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection)
- Safety needs (personal security, employment, resources, health, property)
- Physiological needs (air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction)

**Re-imagined Maslow**

Harry Kaufman, Scott. (2020) Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization. Penguin Random House.


**2 kinds of poverty**

1. Material
2. Spiritual
  - Belonging/meaning/ self worth/explanations based on truth
  - Far more dangerous
  - Unhealthy source of food and water does not create as much destructive anger as a person alienated

School of Wellness  
 Revolutionizing Self-Care

### Terms

- **Inherited Trauma:** At least 5 generations (Holocaust)
- **Addiction:** an expression of FLIGHT energy- to get away from emotional or physical state- to dim or tune off pain. Key is to shift the state to get out of pain VS numbing person must be motivated to learn this. Driven by our unconscious reaction to our pain.
- **Triggering:** Highly charged activation
- **Languishing:** ½ way between contentment and depression-tank running empty
- **Compassion:** an awareness of suffering in oneself and others and the wish to relieve it



### Trauma

**"Big T" "Individualized Trauma"**  
**Life is threatened**


Examples

- Serious Illness
- Abusive home
- Neglect
- Substance abuse
- Incarceration
- Racism

**"Little t" Trauma**  
**Safety and wellbeing threatened**


Examples

- Burnout/moral distress
- Bullying
- Divorce
- Financial scarcity
- Incivility
- Inequality
- all forms (training contract nurses)





### Little trauma

**Unreliable**



**Incompetence**






### Adverse Childhood Events

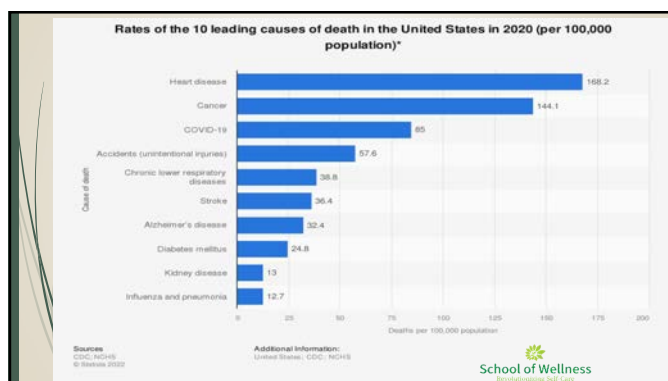


Did a parent swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you, made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?	Did a parent push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or: hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?	Did an adult/person at least 5 years older than you ever... a) Touch you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or b) Attempt or have oral/anal or vaginal intercourse with you?	Did you often feel that a) No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or b) Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
Did you not have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Were parents too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?	Were your parents ever separated or divorced?	Was your mother or stepmother: pushed, grabbed, slapped, had something thrown at her, kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, threatened with a gun or knife?	Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?	Did a household member go to prison?		

### Healing: Regulate the Self

- The person with trauma must be **highly motivated to want to heal** and practice altering their nervous system over time.
- **Trauma can be healed-**
  - the nervous system tendency to jump back in and stay in painful states **can be interrupted**
  - We can learn to navigate and direct our nervous system.
- Awareness of fright/flight/freeze state- only the body can tell us
- Create a tool kit to self-regulate
- **Unlearn to blame ourselves** when we drop into a trauma reaction
  - most psychological suffering would be **reduced with this one thing**
- **Expand our capacity** for greater empathy and connection
- Hacks to move the body out of a distracted state






**Effectiveness of an Extended Yoga Treatment for Women with Chronic Posttraumatic Stress Disorder**  
Maggi Price, Joseph Spinazzola, Regina Muscareo, Jennifer Turner, Michael Szvak, David Emerson, and Beaud van der Kolk. The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. Apr 2017; 18(4):509-516. doi:10.1089/acm.2016.0120  
 •Published in Volume 23 Issue 4, April 1, 2017



**Yoga for Adult Women with Chronic PTSD: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study**

Frequency of continuing yoga practice **significantly predicted greater decreases in PTSD symptom severity** and depression symptom severity, as well as a greater likelihood of a loss of PTSD diagnosis.

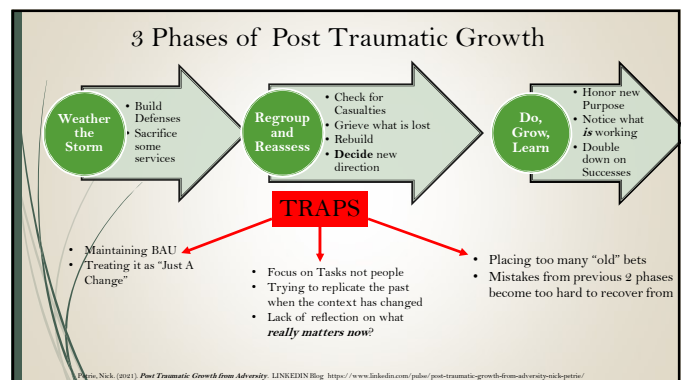
Rhodes, A., Spinazzola, J., & van der Kolk, B. (2016). Yoga for adult women with chronic PTSD: A long-term follow-up study. *The journal of alternative and complementary medicine*, 22(5), 388-395.



Free Yoga 11 Million Subscribers





9 Non Physical needs	Ways to Help ANYBODY CAN DO THESE!
Purpose and Meaning	Assign a responsibility
Nurturing relationships	Express care and concern, give full attention, show compassion/empathy
Explanations	Offer explanations, model honesty and curiosity when you don't have the answer.
Expression	Invite their perspectives, opinions and insights; open door policy for grievances or suggestions; minimize distance in communications
Inspiration	Provide a vision, imagine together, set goals, lead by example
Belonging	Help them connect with others, encourage them to represent as members of a community
Self-Worth	Offer positive feedback, acknowledge learning pit, normalize mistakes
Challenge	Give achievable challenge, invite problem-solving, creativity, friendly and productive competition
Transcendence (transcending our sense of time)	Be in the present moment; find ways to create a sense of wonder and awe; practice meditation /develop deep focus



**A Culture of Wellbeing**  
**Baked in practices for optimal well-being**


- ½ of US with one chronic disease and
  - 80% preventable with **healthy lifestyle behaviors**
- Humans need:
  - Regular physical activity
  - Healthy real food
  - To not smoke
  - To limit alcohol if they drink
  - Sleep at least seven hours a night
  - Practice regular stress reduction strategies



**7 Questions to ID the Psychological Safety (or not) of a team**

1. **If you make a mistake, is it held against you?**
2. **Are members able to bring up problems and tough issues?**
3. **Do people rarely get rejected for being different?**
4. **Is it safe to take a risk?**
5. Is it easy to ask other members for help?
6. Would any one deliberately act in a way that undermines his efforts?
7. Are my unique skills and talents are allowed and utilized?


Edmondson, Amy (1 June 1999). "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 44 (2): 350-383. doi:10.2307/2390600. JSTOR 2390600.






### Wellbeing Group Practices

- Establish Team Norms
  - Civility
  - Short staffed procedures
  - Huddles
- Team Lavender
- Schwartz Rounds
- Awareness of self (trauma tangles)



### Stress First Aid: Schwartz Rounds, Evidence Informed




- Strength of our connections linked to wellbeing and longevity
- Promotes Feeling of
  - Safety
  - Calm
  - Connection
  - Self Efficacy
  - Hope


Schwartz Rounds: reviving compassion in modern healthcare  
 John R Pepper, Sian I Jagger, Mark J Mason, Simon J Finney, Michael Dusmet. J R Soc Med. 2012 Mar; 105(3): 94-95. doi: 10.1258/jrsm.2011.110231

### People in systems need:

- Informational supports
  - Short lines of communication
  - Judgment-free ability to report incidents
- Logistical, practical support
  - Accessible food/fluids/ respite rooms
  - On site security
- Social Connection
- Psychological support
  - Rapid access virtual psychotherapy
  - Mediation apps



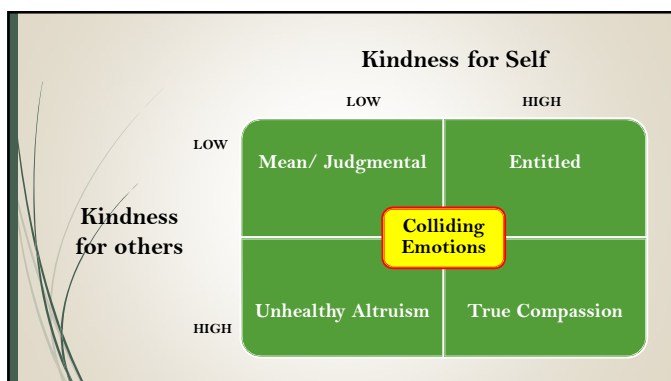
### Harvard and MIT Work and Wellbeing Initiative



#### 3 Design Principles

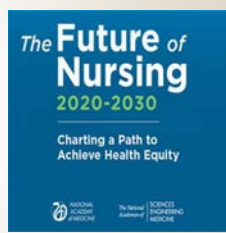

1. Give employees more control over their work
  - Task variety
  - Autonomy
  - Schedule
  - More influence
2. Tame Excessive work demands
  - More time with patients
  - Hire support staff for unskilled labor
3. Improve Social Relationship in the Workplace
  - Supportive supervisor and coworker relationships
  - Foster teamwork

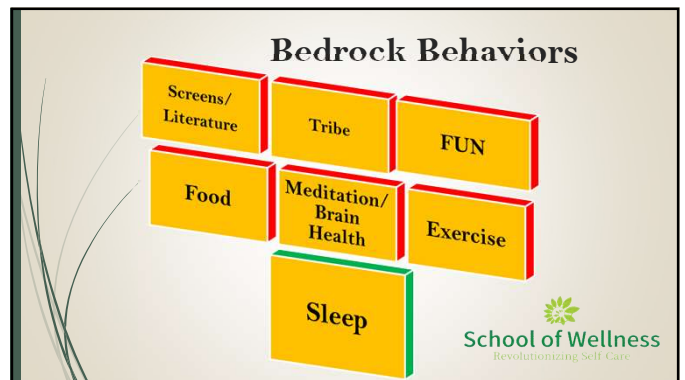
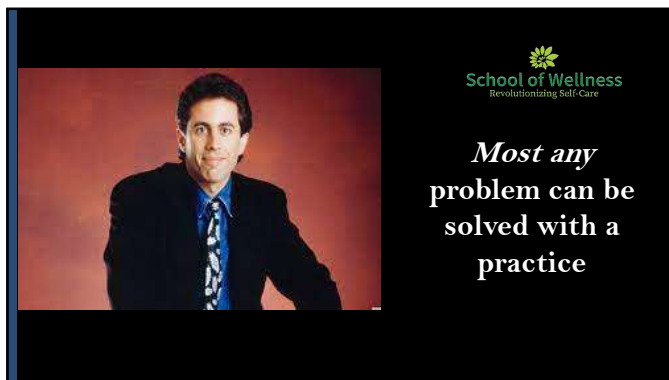
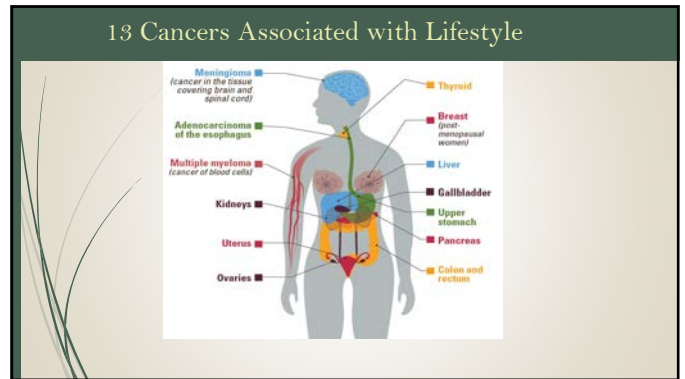
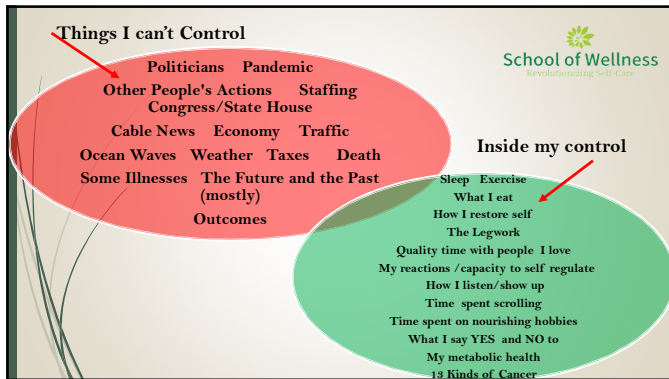
Meg Lovejoy, Erin L. Kelly, Laura D. Rubzansky, Lisa F. Berkman, "Work Redesign for the 21st Century: Promising Strategies for Enhancing Worker Well-Being," *American Journal of Public Health* 111, no. 10 (October 1, 2021): pp. 1787-1793.



### Support the Health and Wellbeing of Nurses

- Eliminate structural stressors that lead to burnout.
- Nurses must feel healthy, well and supported.
- Educators, policymakers, employers and leaders all play a role.



- What I've learned.....**
- Prioritizing our own wellbeing (and that of others) is a form of intelligence.
    - Can't be on fumes in a crisis
    - Can't give what you don't have
  - Resilience is a relationship with one's resources
    - Requires ongoing and deeper learning, adaptation, and coping (and resources!)
  - The system must change
  - Claim and practice your source of rejuvenation
  - Emotions are important information
  - Burrowing/ignoring emotions is not benign
  - Negative emotions are as necessary as positive emotions (not binary)
  - Post traumatic growth exists
  - We *mostly* have more agency (control) than we claim

• **Contact me**  
[www.eileenogrady.net](http://www.eileenogrady.net)