Clinicin Well-Being in 2022:
Trading Perfection for “Good Enough”

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Disclosures

Sansea Jacobson, MD
No relevant financial disclosures

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Supports resident & fellow physician well-across UPMC

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STAR-Center Therapist
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Our Relevant Disclosures

Sansea
- Single full-time working mom
- Have sought therapy for myself
- Double-booked myself today!
- The word **wellness** makes me cringe

Dominique
- Married full-time therapist with no kids
- Have sought therapy for myself
- Recovering workaholic
- Became a therapist to spend less time on screens

Who are you?
Agenda

The current state of affairs
Connecting our experiences
Finding our “good enough”

Learning Objectives

1. Describe how a “good enough” mindset can support well-being and define what “good enough” means in our current clinical/work environment

2. Name at least one new way to cope with workplace stress in an adaptive way

3. Connect meaningfully and authentically with fellow clinicians around the experience of being a mental health professional in 2022
BACKGROUND:
THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS
4 major sources of stress for healthcare workers

- **Traumatic injury**: Threat to personal/family health/life
- **Grief injury**: Loss of colleagues or threat to mastery and identity
- **Moral injury**: Inner conflict between values and what we can accomplish, lack of control over or disagreement with larger systems that we must work within
- **Fatigue injury**: Feeling worn out by work without time for rest and recovery

(Chrisman, 2020)

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**Telehealth has its pros and cons...**

- **Telepressure**
- **Zoom Fatigue**
Telepressure

**What is it?** → A fixation with checking and responding to messages quickly

**What is the impact?**
- Increases workload
- Positively associated with burnout and emotional exhaustion
- Blurs boundaries between work life/home life

(Kotera et al, 2021)

“One of the most commonly noted major sources of stress for child and youth mental health clinicians is fatigue associated with the lack of boundaries between work and personal life.”

(Chrisman, 2020)
Zoom Fatigue

**What is it?** ➔ A feeling of exhaustion from participating in video conference calls

**What causes it?**
- Amount of eye gaze at close distance
- Limited physical mobility
- Constant viewing of self in the video
- Increased cognitive load

*PLUS – working virtually with youth brings unique challenges such as patients not remaining on screen, not showing their faces, rapidly moving the camera, or becoming easily distracted* (Fauville et al, 2021)

**The result?** *Languishing*

- Term coined by sociologist Corey Keyes
- The void between depression and thriving or the absence of well-being
- Can manifest as difficulty with motivation and focus
- Can be a predecessor to anxiety and depression

(Grant, 2021)
The result? **Burnout**

A result of unmanaged, chronic workplace stress

You may notice it as...
- Energy depletion or exhaustion
- Negativity and cynicism towards work
- Reduced efficacy at work

(Kotera et al, 2021)

Burnout shows up when things are out of balance:
- Work vs life (strongest predictor)
- Demands vs resources
- Effort invested vs progress made

Burnout is now included in the ICD (2019) and recognized by the WHO as an official occupational condition “resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.”

(Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019 | Kotera et al, 2021)
THE IMPACT

40% of healthcare workers reporting depressive symptoms

45% of healthcare workers reporting severe anxiety symptoms

(Kotera et al, 2021)

Part 2

EMPATHY:
CONNECTING OUR EXPERIENCES
Let’s discuss!

• What have you heard today that resonates with your experience as a clinician in 2022?

• If languishing was the dominant emotion of 2021, what is the dominant emotion of 2022?

• What solutions have you found for coping with languishing and burnout?

Let’s Debrief!
Part 3

**SOLUTIONS:**
FINDING OUR GOOD ENOUGH

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**Stressors**

The triggers that activate a stress response such as work, family, expectations, discrimination, self-criticism, the future, etc.

**Stress**

The neurological and physiological shift that happens in most every organ in your body in response to a stressor

- Fight/flight/freeze response
- Adrenaline, cortisol, glycogen

(Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)
Evolutionary Explanation #1

In our modern world we often find ourselves dealing with the stressors by problem solving, avoiding, and cognitive solutions, but rarely deal with the STRESS, which leads to chronic stress.

(Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)

We need to complete the stress cycle

Stress response cycle must be completed (ideally daily!) to flush the stress response from our body.

(Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)
RESET Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reset Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Take the time our body needs to unwind and discharge from stress cycles through vacation, tension release exercises, breathing, meditation and savoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Interrupt stress cycles and stress hormone reduction through physical activity, mini-breaks and social connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Anti-inflammatory and restorative cleanse of the brain through sleep tactics (7-hour minimum, match sleep cycles to light cycles, mindfulness before bed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional re-regulation</td>
<td>Emotional decompression to protect against future stress and counterbalance compartmentalization (e.g., smiling, laughing, good cathartic crying and purposeful presence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think positive</td>
<td>Practice resilience through positive psychology around opportunity and crisis, sense of accomplishment, gratitude journaling, intentional empathy for others, focus on silver linings</td>
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(Szigethy, 2022)

Evolutionary Explanation #2

Our brains are tuned for survival with constant monitoring the quality of our action and progress based on what our goals are, how much effort we’re investing, and how much progress we’re making.

(Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)
We need not always be in survival mode

We need to redefine our values and commit to them. Act on them, reflect on them, and let go of "should" and switch to "choose," "will," and "could." (Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)

Good Enough Mindset

Define work values intentionally before you start the work. Determine measurable, attainable ways for you to have success at work. Let go of "should" and switch to "choose," "will," "could." (Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019)
Ask yourself...

- Can I change the goal?
- Can I redefine what “a job well done” means?
- Can I break this down into smaller incremental steps that are attainable, tangible, and specific?

What could “good enough” mean in your work environment?
It all goes back to child psychology

How can we move towards positive reappraisal?

- Validate and acknowledge that things are difficult
- Recognize that in the struggle may be opportunity
- Celebrate incremental wins
- Create structure and be intentional about your approach

Rethinking boundaries

- Does your BEDTIME give you adequate time for sleep?
- When can you EXERCISE?
- When do your LOVED ONES have your undivided attention?
- Are you intentional about when you check your EMAIL?
- How do you feel about your current daily SCREENTIME?
Use technology to your advantage

What about self-compassion?

The evidence-base research on self-compassion is promising for patients and providers alike

- **Psychological Benefits**: mindfulness allows us to acknowledge the suffering by owning how we are really feeling
- **Protective Factor**: against burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion; not as helpful with depersonalization)
- **Improved Resilience**: High levels of self compassion = improved resilience to mental distress

(Grant, 2021 | Kotera, 2021)
Finding meaning

It is crucial to feel connected to something larger than ourselves

• Meaning promotes healing, thriving, and is linked to:
  ✓ positive health outcomes
  ✓ better relationships
  ✓ improved well-being
  ✓ reduced stress

• Meaning isn’t found – it’s made.
  *We must actively engage with it!*

Finding meaning in our community...
Thank you!
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Dominique Dove (doved2@upmc.edu)

References


Fauville, Geraldine and Luo, Mufan and Queiroz, Anna C. M. and Bailenson, Jeremy N. and Hancock, Jeff, Zoom Exhaustion & Fatigue Scale (February 15, 2021).

