Clinician Wellness: Building Resiliency in the Primary Care Home Team

Rationale

“Resiliency is a dynamic, evolving process of positive attitudes and effective strategies.”¹

Effective strategies for dealing with the stress of Family Medicine (FM) can occur at the personal, occupational and health care system levels.² In this workshop, participants will learn an effective, evidence-based strategy for building resilience. We will present a new cognitive-behavioral therapy model, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)³ and demonstrate application to provider wellness, given the stresses of balancing work and play while participating fully in practice redesign. Characteristics of burnout in providers of primary care include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decreased experience of personal accomplishment. Prevalence estimates of burnout in primary care providers range from 26 percent to 65 percent⁴ and estimates for behavioral health providers are significant as well. Available estimates of burnout in medical students suggest that as many as 45% experience burnout.⁵ Among medical residents, estimates of burnout range from 10-74%.⁶ Burnout in trainees and clinicians contributes to personal suffering and has a potentially huge impact on the availability of healthcare services today and in the future, as fewer physicians choose careers in primary care medicine and many currently practicing pursue career re-training or early retirement.⁷

The National Demonstration Project (NDP) of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) describes how practices with “adaptive reserve” are more likely to succeed in transforming to the PCMH⁸ (PCPCI Home). Practices without a healthy human infrastructure, an aligned management model and facilitative leadership are less able to deal with the on-going pressure of change associated with redesign. This results in conflict, burnout and turnover within the practice. Medical and behavioral health providers on the primary care home team will need to accept and value new roles and mental models, be self-aware and develop relationships with new providers in order to participate optimally in multi-disciplinary team-based care. ACT teaches providers to be mindful and engage in values-based choices in the clinic and outside the clinic.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is an accessible psychological approach for members of the primary care home to apply to the daily stresses of life at work and home. It has been used successfully for a multitude of mental and medical conditions and also been found to be useful in the workplace.⁹ The six core ACT processes provide a platform for building personal resiliency by incorporating mindfulness and value clarification and connection strategies. To complement our ACT practice with patients, we developed a series of workshops for residents (Self-Management Skills for Residents). This webinar introduces participants to materials and participants will need to spend several hours afterwards completing recommended assessments and intervention workshops.
References


Primary References