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ccpa news

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Letter from CCPA/CCPAPP's Executive Director Kena Norris, MJ, FACHE

Dear CCPA Member,

The work that you and your practice staff do is crucial to patient outcomes. Taking care of others means that you must first take care of yourself. Thus, safeguarding the well-being of the healthcare workforce is imperative for not only the workers themselves, but can also improve patient safety and satisfaction, raise quality of care, and lower costs.¹

Sources of dissatisfaction for healthcare workers are often varied and can be interrelated, which include financial pressures, increased workloads, pressures to improve quality of care, inadequate time with patients, electronic health records, and administrative requirements.² These stressors can lead to an immeasurable cost to your own well-being thereby impacting the quality of your personal and professional life.

So how do you improve the well-being for yourself and your staff? You must first be intentional when employing strategies that prioritize well-being and resilience. And while there are various approaches, the most effective ones will be specifically tailored to the needs of your practice. As such, the focus of this issue is implementing practice well-being strategies, which we hope will provide some tips, ideas, and resources for our members.

Best regards,

Kena

References:

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Global Health; Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education; Forstag EH, Cuff PA, editors. *A Design Thinking, Systems Approach to Well-Being Within Education and Practice: Proceedings of a Workshop*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2018 Oct 11. Appendix B, The Importance of Well-Being in the Health Care Workforce.
2. Ibid

Association Updates

2022 CCPA Educational Seminar: Immunization – Practice Survival – Video Available

For CCPA members who were unable to attend the Immunization – Practice Survival event on May 18, 2022, the webinar is now available on the CCPA website at www.ccpaipa.org in the Members' Portal section. It is free of charge for members and can be watched at your convenience.

CCPA Member Benefit Reminders

Please be sure to check out the online American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Pediatric Coding Newsletter that has been updated to view on any mobile device. This benefit includes new coding webinars, access to past issues and other pediatric coding resources that are free to CCPA members. The monthly newsletter can be accessed via the CCPA website at www.ccpaipa.org in the Members' Portal section.

Also, as a reminder, CPR reimbursement is available up to \$60 for all CCPA members. Please submit your paid invoice and a copy of your CPR card to ccpa@luriechildrens.org or by fax to 312.227.9526.

Lurie Children's Physician Services Webpage

The Physician Services' department webpage, can be accessed at luriechildrens.org/physicianservices. This site may be a useful resource to "favorite" or bookmark for future use because it includes:

- Satellite clinic schedules
- Quick reference guides
- Referral and consultation to/ from Lurie Children's
- Contact resources at Lurie Children's
- Video library of virtual round table discussions on a variety of topics
- Community Provider Symposium Video Library
- LurieMD Provider Call Line (1.855. LurieMD or 1.855.587.4363)

CCPA News

CCPA News has expanded its content to cover pertinent healthcare law, practice management and other related issues using experts in these areas. If there is a legal, regulatory or practice management matter that you would like us to address in the newsletter, please contact LaVonna Swilley, CCPA Director of Operations at 312.227.7425 or lswilley@luriechildrens.org.



In the Spotlight

Did you know that CCPA has several members who are pediatric specialists? This section will provide a rotating spotlight on CCPA's subspecialists.



Aaron Donnell, MD & Kelly Newhall, MD

Chicago Family Asthma & Allergy
2551 N. Clark Street, Suite 100
Chicago, IL 60614
773.388.2322

<https://www.chicagofamilyasthma.com/>

Dr. Aaron Donnell is a native of Nashville, TN and first experienced Chicagoland when he earned his bachelor's degree in biology at Wheaton College. He completed medical school at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine and completed his residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk, VA. After serving an additional year as pediatric chief resident, he came to Chicago for a fellowship in allergy/immunology at Children's Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Memorial Hospital and is board-certified in pediatrics and allergy/immunology. Dr. Donnell started working in private practice in Chicago in 2005. He lives in Chicago with his family, and his four energetic children have nourished a special level of patience and a sense of humor in his life.



Dr. Aaron Donnell



Dr. Kelly Newhall

2000. She earned a bachelor's degree in medical social science from Pomona College in Los Angeles, and she then obtained her medical degree from Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Dr. Newhall completed her first two years of residency at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia and finished her pediatrics training at the University of Chicago Children's Hospital. She completed a fellowship in allergy/immunology at Children's Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Memorial Hospital and is board-certified in pediatrics and allergy/immunology. Dr. Newhall started working in private practice in 2004. She currently lives in Lincoln Park with her family.

In addition, Dr. Donnell and Dr. Newhall created Chicago Family Asthma & Allergy (CFAA) in 2009 as they shared a vision of providing quality care to families with asthma and allergic conditions. Hence, the doctors and staff at CFAA pride themselves on offering comprehensive allergy services to patients of all ages. This includes skin testing for environmental and food allergens, spirometry, penicillin allergy evaluation, food challenges and evaluation of immunodeficiency. They are now excited to offer new food allergy therapies, including sublingual immunotherapy and oral immunotherapy, to help improve the prognosis of chronic food allergy risks.

Dr. Kelly Newhall lived in many different areas of the United States and is proud to have called Chicago home since

Implementing Practice-wide Well-being Strategies



By Amy Johnston, LCSW, PMH-C, Urban Wellness

Let us get a few things straight, right from the start. "Three simple tips" will not prevent burnout.

"Five easy strategies" are not going to erase your symptoms of work-related anxiety or depression.

"Ten ways to say "no" to things" (that you should not be asked to do in the first place) cannot fix unrealistic expectations and workloads.

All things considered, the pandemic has created unprecedented levels of burnout and compassion fatigue amongst healthcare providers and staff. This is not news to anyone. However, it does lead us to a conversation that every leader in private practice should discuss, which is employee burnout and workplace well-being are systems issues that require systems-based solutions.

Hands up high, I have been guilty of writing about tips, tricks, and strategies for employees to cope and maybe feel

better. In an effort to give people a sense of agency and control, I worry that we might be inadvertently placing the burden in the wrong spot.

Recently, I saw a well-meaning article touting three easy ways to prevent burnout and something inside me died a little. Burnout. Exhaustion. Depression. Stress. Overwhelm. These are very real experiences that so many of us have been having over the past few years. We DO need strategies to fix this pervasive problem. It is just that every time we suggest that employees can take control of their situation by acting differently, we miss an opportunity for leaders, organizations, and systems to do better. Burnout is a system issue. Therefore, unrealistic expectations, too much responsibility and not enough control, and lack of authentic connection and genuine relationships are all ingredients of this toxic pie.

Individual responsibility to "solve" our own burnout problems, place people in an unwinnable position. Therefore, when the tips and tricks do not work, the blame can rest

squarely on the person who could not cope. Instead of the organization that did not create a culture where mental health and well-being is a priority. The tips and tricks are helpful. They can support you to cope with the stressors and challenges you are up against. However, they are not solutions to the root problems. In an ideal world, we need both self-care strategies and workplace solutions.

Leaders have an opportunity to consider the balance of demands and resources in your practice and take practical steps to shift the culture toward well-being.

Self-care strategies are essential for managing the daily stressors we all face and are not going anywhere soon. We also need strong, vulnerable, and transparent leadership to set the tone. We need to build genuine, authentic, and trusting relationships within our teams. We need to pay attention to the culture of the practice and identify shared values and purpose. And we need realistic workloads with achievable goals. Let us talk about how we can get there.

Burnout, Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Trauma

Burnout has been a major talking point when it comes to mental health in healthcare. The World Health Organization says that burnout includes:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- Reduced professional efficacy.

At its core, burnout is caused by an imbalance between job demands and job resources. Paula Davis outlines the key factors contributing to burnout in her book, *Beating Burnout at Work: Why Teams Hold the Secret to Well-Being and Resilience* (2021).

Job demands include:

- Lack of autonomy
- High workload/pressure
- Lack of support from leaders/colleagues

- Unfairness (lack of transparency, arbitrary decision making, favoritism)
- Values disconnect
- Lack of recognition

Job resources include:

- High quality relationships with colleagues and leaders
- Decision authority/participation
- Feedback
- Autonomy and job control
- Development opportunities
- Leader support
- Recognition
- Meaningful work/impact
- Role clarity

When job demands outweigh job resources, burnout is inevitable. Leaders have an opportunity to consider the balance of demands and resources in your practice and take practical steps to shift the culture toward well-being.

In addition to burnout, many practice staff and providers are also experiencing compassion fatigue and secondary trauma as related, but unique phenomena. While burnout can occur when you no longer care about your work in the same way, compassion fatigue occurs when you care too much. Compassion fatigue describes the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others often through experiences of stress or trauma. Providers and staff have been witnessing and holding space for the trauma of their patients for a long time, and the impacts cannot be denied. Laura van Dernoot Lipsky talks about these impacts in her book, *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others* (2009).

Warning signs can include:

- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- A sense that one can never do enough
- Hypervigilance
- Diminished creativity
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Minimizing the concerns of others
- Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
- Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
- Dissociative moments
- Sense of persecution
- Guilt
- Fear

- Anger and cynicism
- Inability to empathize/numbing
- Addictions
- Grandiosity: an inflated sense of importance related to one's work

Healthcare providers and practice staff are particularly at risk for burnout and compassion fatigue for several reasons. Some of which can include caregivers being empathetic to their patients' needs and illnesses, but with insufficient recovery time due to busy schedules and constant work demands. Including the inherent vulnerability of patients, especially in pediatrics or when working with the elderly.

Moreover, the systemic isolation and fragmentation of staff, coupled with a lack of systemic resources, can lead to the feeling that there is more to be done than can be accomplished. Thus, addressing patient needs can feel overwhelming in comparison to the provider's ability to support them. In addition to staff and providers having their own unresolved personal traumas which can be triggered by workplace stressors.

Cultivating trust and connection is a powerful antidote to burnout.

When you or your team are experiencing these impacts, it becomes essential to cultivate both internal and external strategies that can support coping, resilience, and connection.

Self-Care

While systemic change is the ultimate solution to burnout, self-care is extremely important and something that many of us do not fully understand. Self-care does not just include spa-days, treating yourself to something new, or taking gorgeous vacations. Self-care is the regular effort we make to give our bodies and our emotional selves the support, rest, and resources we need to handle the stressors we encounter every day. Research is clear that there are simple practices that help us to manage our body's stress response and help us to tolerate challenges as they arise. Some basic strategies that are sure to help decrease chronically high cortisol and adrenaline levels are:

- Exercise for 20-60 minutes a day

- Whatever way you like. Walking, running, yoga, dance parties in your kitchen, it all counts!
- Breathing
 - Slow, steady practices like triangle breathing are a great starting point. Inhale for five seconds, hold your breath for five seconds, exhale for five seconds. Repeat at least five times.
- Casual, Friendly Interaction
 - Chatting with your barista or catching up at the watercooler are good for your health.
- Laughter, Crying, Big Emotions
 - Do not avoid the big feelings. Acknowledging your emotions and letting them arise is healthy and helpful.
- Affection
 - Hugs, kisses, and snuggling your loved ones or your pets. Are all great strategies to regulate your stress.
- Creative Expression
 - Do you like to draw? Play music? Are you into crafting or woodworking? Cooking or baking? When you use this part of your brain, you are helping your nervous system to calm down.

Some workplace related strategies for self-care include:

- Cultivate trusting relationships
 - Get to know your colleagues as humans, show interest and offer support.
- Say "No" when you cannot take on more work
 - We only have some much time and energy to spend, and we need to acknowledge and communicate our boundaries.
- Curate your space
 - We spend a lot of time in our workspace, so let us make it a space that is enjoyable, comfortable, and pleasant.
- Be clear about what you need
 - Ask for the resources you need to do your work, be open to support and help.
- Be honest with yourself
 - Acknowledge your skills, talents, and limitations.

The Intersection of Leadership, Trust and Connection

It is 100% the responsibility of leaders to set the tone for well-being in the workplace. Cultivating trust and connection is a powerful antidote to burnout. One way to achieve this is to create space for psychological

safety. Psychological safety is the belief that one can be oneself, take risks, ask questions, respectfully disagree, make mistakes, and work out problems without being embarrassed, singled out or penalized.

Strategies for leaders to cultivate this kind of culture include:

- Be accessible and approachable
- Acknowledge people directly
- Be clear about standards and handle issues consistently
- Seek out opinions, pros, and cons for your ideas
- Be transparent if you do not know
- Provide ongoing status updates on projects or changes
- Rotate leadership of meetings

When someone makes a mistake or a risk backfires; frame it as a learning opportunity and acknowledge times you have made mistakes.

Benefits of creating this type of culture include increased creativity, innovation, and shared experiences. It sets the stage for belonging. It is critical for successful teamwork.

Another way that leaders (and all team members) can support staff is to capitalize on good news to build authentic relationships. When a team member brings good news to work, you can respond in a few different ways. Some responses can build connections. Others can create barriers and shut others down. Active and constructive responding (ACR) entails showing authentic, genuine interest, enthusiasm, and support. This is accomplished by asking questions and looking for elaboration. This type of response shows that you care about the person sharing news and helps to build a foundation for a trusting and supportive relationship. For example, if I were to tell my colleague that I just facilitated a great workplace mental health workshop, an ACR might be: "Congratulations! Tell me more about how the session went. What were the best parts of the day? How did you feel when it was over?" Next time someone shares good news with you, practice responding with curiosity and positivity.

A final strategy for leaders to adopt is to talk about stress, challenges, and the hard stuff. Leaders sometimes struggle with how to start the conversation when they are concerned about someone. Then once they are involved in a tough conversation, they can feel uncertain about how to respond. Here are some conversation starters that can help to begin a dialogue when you want to check in with someone:

- It has been such a challenging year. How is it impacting you?
- I have noticed that you have been [insert behavior]. Do you feel like talking about it? I am here to listen.
- How are you feeling about your role and workload? What can I do to better support you?
- I know things have been tough lately. How are you feeling today? What have you found helpful for coping?

Meaning is the subjective experience that our work matters.

Some important guidelines to keep in mind when it comes to setting healthy boundaries and providing support are:

- Do not assume you can fix every problem. Often, just being a good listener makes a world of difference.
- Be curious and avoid judgment. Ask open-ended questions to clarify your understanding of the situation. Keep a supportive stance. For example, "How do you usually cope when you feel like this? What can I do to help support you?"
- Repeat back and check-in to show understanding. For example, "What I am hearing is that you are really overwhelmed with all the responsibilities you are currently juggling, and you feel like you cannot get to everything that needs to be done, is that right?"
- Show appreciation when someone confides to you. A great way to do this is by saying something like: "Wow, that sounds really hard. Thank you so much for trusting me with that."
- Acknowledge when you are out of your depth. If someone expresses thoughts of self-harm or suicide and if you are worried about their safety or the safety of others. Or you just feel out of your depth with the level of mental health support someone needs. Always refer them to a mental health professional. Helping to connect your team members with these services is a great way to take care of them.

Workplace Culture, Meaning, Impact and Values

Have you ever thought about your practice's culture? What makes you unique as a group? How do you connect over shared values? Do you talk about the meaning and impact of your work?

Meaning is the subjective experience that our work matters. Impact is that sense that our work helps others. Values are core principles and ideals. Culture is the set of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes of an organization. All four components are important in creating a buffer against burnout and supporting staff well-being in a private practice.

For practices that are interested in combating burnout and cultivating well-being, it is essential to protect time and space for these collective conversations.

- Why do we do what we do?
- What is the impact we make?
- What do we value as a team?
- What kind of workplace culture do we have?
- What kind of workplace culture do we want?
- What are the barriers to achieving this shared vision?

Consequently, when our work aligns with our values, makes an impact, and is interesting, we then experience a sense of meaning and motivation. When we experience this collectively, a sense of purpose and belonging arises.

Where to Go from Here

Building a culture of well-being and addressing the causes of burnout should start right now. Every small step you take as a practice, moves you closer to your ultimate vision for a thriving practice. To begin, all leaders and people managers should engage in training on recognizing and addressing burnout, mental health, and well-being in the workplace. Additionally, practices may want to consult with a workplace mental health professional to support their goals and to implement practice-wide well-being strategies.

Creating a mentally healthy workplace culture is not easy. It takes time, commitment, a reshaping of priorities, and a real effort on the part of leaders. Nevertheless, when it is done with thoughtfulness, care, and a sense of purpose, even the process itself is something that can bring colleagues together, create space for connection, and invite teams to collaborate on building something bigger than themselves.

Amy is a licensed clinical social worker with extensive experience working in mental health, trauma, and burnout. Amy supported parents and staff in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, before joining Urban Wellness in 2019.

CCPA & CCPA PURCHASING PARTNERS STAFF:

Kena Norris

Executive Director
CCPA/CCPAPP
312.227.7406

Jennifer Jackson

Sr. Administrative Assistant
CCPA/CCPAPP
312.227.7442

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION (CCPA):

LaVonna Swilley

Director of Operations
CCPA
312.227.7425

Micaela Andres

Member Relations
Specialist
CCPA
312.227.7567

CCPA PURCHASING PARTNERS (CCPAPP):

Pareesh Patel

Director of Operations
CCPAPP
312.227.7436

Sonia Gandara

Member Relations
Specialist
CCPAPP
312.227.7508

CCPA & CCPA PURCHASING PARTNERS BOARD MEMBERS:

Jennifer Ann Bevan, MD

Lake Forest Pediatric
Associates, LTD

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