

# Signs of Struggle:

## Burnout, Depression, & Substance Abuse



# Warning Signs of Burnout



# Warning Signs of Burnout

What is Burnout?

## **Emotional Exhaustion**

As emotional resources are depleted, we are no longer able to give of ourselves at a psychological level

## **Depersonalization**

Negative, cynical, and dehumanizing attitudes and feelings about patients or training

## **Reduced Personal Accomplishment**

Tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with patients



# Warning Signs of Burnout

Emotional Symptoms of Stress

**Feeling overwhelmed**  
**Irritability**  
**Feeling depressed**  
**Intolerance of others**  
**Aggressiveness and/or anger**  
**Suspiciousness**  
**Fussiness**  
**Restlessness**  
**Anxiety**

# Warning Signs of Burnout

## Behavioral Signs of Stress

**Difficulty getting to sleep**  
**Increased smoking**  
**Increased alcohol consumption**  
**Increased casual sex**  
**Over eating**  
**Obsessive dieting**  
**Grinding of teeth**  
**Facial Tic**  
**Finger or foot tapping**

# Warning Signs of Burnout

## Physical Symptoms of Stress

**Headaches**

**Dry mouth and/or throat**

**Indigestion**

**Nausea**

**Constipation**

**Diarrhea**

**Sudden weight loss or weight gain**

# Warning Signs of Burnout

Signs of Stress in the Workplace

**Absenteeism**  
**Working long hours**  
**Missing deadlines**  
**Drop in productivity**  
**Conflicts with co-workers**  
**Resentment over pay**  
**Inability to take feedback**  
**Boredom**  
**Frustration**



# Warning Signs of Depression



# Warning Signs of Depression

What is Major Depression?

**Per the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), experiencing at least 5 of the following symptoms for a period of 2 weeks can cause distress/impairment in social, occupational, or other important functioning.**

Depressed mood\*

Decreased interest or pleasure\*

Significant variations in weight or appetite (gain/loss)

Insomnia or Hypersomnia

Psychomotor agitation or retardation

Daily fatigue or energy loss

Feelings of worthlessness or guilt

Difficulties in concentration or decisiveness

Recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation, plan, or attempt

\*One of these symptoms must be present

# Warning Signs of Depression

What is Depression?

## Common additional symptoms of depression:

Hopelessness

Anxiety

Irritability

Impatience

Sleep disturbances

Tearfulness

Increased isolation

Somatic pain

Substance abuse

Low sex drive

Recklessness or Self Sabotage

Change in work quality or attention to detail

Apathy or amotivation

Hygiene changes



# Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

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## Signs & symptoms of substance abuse in the workplace:

Frequently absent from work without reasonable explanations

Arriving late consistently

Missing appointments with patients

Inaccessibility to patients and staff

Inappropriate behavior with colleagues, staff, and patients

Avoiding a supervisor or other colleagues

Rounding on patients at odd hours

Large quantities of drugs ordered

Inappropriate orders and forgotten verbal orders

A disorganized schedule and missed deadlines

Heavy drinking at hospital functions

Vague letters of reference

Multiple prescriptions for family members

Long lunches or unnecessary breaks

Decreased chart and work performance

Baldisseri. Impaired health care professional. Crit Care Med 2007 Vol. 35, No. 2 (Suppl.)

# Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

Possible signs suggestive of alcohol dependence

## Signs & Symptoms of Addiction That Might Appear in the Workplace

Alcohol on breath  
Slurred speech  
Ataxia  
Erratic performance or decrement in performance  
Tremulousness  
“Out-of-control” behavior at social events  
Problems with law enforcement (eg, domestic abuse, driving while intoxicated)  
Hidden bottles  
Poor personal hygiene  
Failure to remember events, conversations, or commitments (“blackouts”)

Tardiness  
Frequent hangovers  
Poor early morning performance  
Unexplained absences  
Unusual traumatic injuries  
Mood swings  
Irritability  
Sweating  
Domestic/marital problems  
Isolation  
Leaving the workplace early on a regular basis

Berge et al. Chemical dependency and the physician. Mayo Clin Proc. 2009;84(7):625-631

# Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

Possible signs suggestive of opiate dependence

## Signs & Symptoms of Addiction That Might Appear in the Workplace

- Periods of agitation (withdrawal) alternating with calm (drug was just taken)
- Dilated pupils (opiate withdrawal)
- Pinpoint pupils (side effect of opiate)
- Excessive sweating
- Addition of long sleeves (to hide needle tracks)
- Frequent bathroom breaks (to take another dose)
- Frequent unexplained absences during workday
- Spending more hours at work than necessary (access source of drug)
- Volunteering for extra call
- Volunteering to provide extra breaks or refusing breaks
- Volunteering to clean operating rooms
- Volunteering to return waste drugs to pharmacy
- Rummaging through sharps containers
- Sloppy record keeping or discrepancies between charted dose and actual dose administered
- Excessive narcotic use charted for patients
- Assay of waste drug returned showing evidence of dilution
- Never returning any waste at the end of a case
- Patients arriving in postsurgical recovery room with pain out of proportion to charted narcotic dose

Berge et al. Chemical dependency and the physician. Mayo Clin Proc. 2009;84(7):625-631

# Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

## Professional Lapses

Writing prescriptions for self, staff, family, friends

Requesting prescriptions from colleagues

Diverting patient's medications for self use

# Resources

Your lives as trainees are incredibly busy and complicated. As physicians, you are vulnerable to mood disorders, anxiety, and substance use problems. Please consider reaching out for help if you are struggling. These problems do have solutions and they are easier to manage together.

## **McGaw Online Wellness Toolkit**

<http://mcgaw.northwestern.edu/wellness/index.html>

Includes anonymous mental health screening, self-assessment sheet, and resources for Physical, Emotional, and Financial wellness.

## **McGaw Wellness Liaison: Ashley Bassett, MD**

[abassettmd@gmail.com](mailto:abassettmd@gmail.com) | (312) 834-3814

Dr. Bassett will triage issues and refer trainees for counseling or medical treatment as needed. Any trainee contact with Dr. Bassett will remain confidential and will not be communicated with the program, faculty, or institution, except in cases of imminent harm.

## **Perspectives: Housestaff Assistance Program**

(800) 456-6327 | <https://features.perspectivesltd.com/login.aspx> (login MCG501 | perspectives)

Housestaff can receive up to three free counseling sessions without the use of medical insurance.