



MENTAL WELLNESS AND THE OBSTETRICIAN/GYNAECOLOGIST

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OUTLINE

1. THE EMPOWERED PHYSICIAN
2. UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND DISTRESS
3. THE STRESSORS OF BEING A PHYSICIAN
Is my job driving me crazy?
4. JOB DISTRESS RESOLUTION
5. BUILDING RESILIENCY
FOR FUTURE MENTAL WELLNESS



1. THE EMPOWERED PHYSICIAN



THE EMPOWERED PHYSICIAN

is

A matter of balance



For us who serve,

our ultimate task is to be

self-empowered

so that

we can

empower others



AM I SELF-EMPOWERED?

What does this mean?

Empowerment means ...

- The ability to **face and overcome** our challenges in order to *achieve our life goals*

as well as


- The ability to **influence others** to *face and overcome their challenges* in order to *achieve their life goals*

*Empowerment of self and others
is based on
the most basic human reality:*

This is that

- Each person is “special” with *unique potential to overcome* life’s transitions, tasks and suffering and to *succeed* !

It is our task as physicians to help ourselves and those we serve to unleash that potential



Empowering self and
others requires
inner strength

Our inner strength enables this

“Balance of Empowering”

Empowering Self

Empowering Others

While

A diagram illustrating a balance scale. A horizontal line represents the fulcrum. On the left side of the fulcrum is a blue rectangular box containing the text "Empowering Self". On the right side of the fulcrum is a blue rectangular box containing the text "Empowering Others". Below the fulcrum is a blue triangle pointing upwards, containing the text "While".



This inner strength is
MENTAL WELLNESS

WHAT IS MENTAL WELLNESS?

According to WHO (Oct 11)

A state of well-being in which every individual

- realizes his or her own *potential*,
- can cope with the normal *stresses* of life,
- can work *productively and fruitfully*,
- and is able to make a contribution to his or her *community*.

(Formatting and Italics mine)



2. UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND DISTRESS

UNDERSTANDING STRESS

What is the difference between stressors and stress?

STRESSORS = LIFE INCIDENTS REQUIRING
AN INDIVIDUAL'S ADAPTATION
STRESS = THE CHANGES OF ADAPTATION
to achieve FIGHT or FLIGHT

These are:

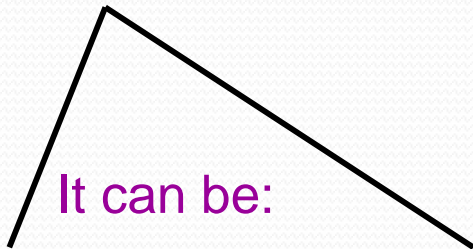
- PHYSICAL
- MENTAL/EMOTIONAL

THE TYPES OF STRESS

STRESSORS = LIFE *INCIDENTS* REQUIRING ADAPTATION



STRESS = THE *CHANGES* OF ADAPTATION



It can be:

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

- PHYSICAL
- MENTAL / EMOTIONAL

EUSTRESS

which is:

- NORMAL
- NON-THREATENING

DISTRESS which

is:

- HARMFUL. It is due to:
- LACK OF - RESOURCES or

MECHANISMS OF STRESS AND DISTRESS

Firstly, STRESS involves the following stages:

1. ALARM STATE = FIGHT OR FLIGHT

HORMONES:
adrenaline

2. RESISTANCE STAGE

DAMAGE REPAIR

3. EXHAUSTION STAGE

Secondly,
**PERSISTENT
STRESS** leads to:

DISTRESS which
involves:

- Symptoms and
- Behaviours

SOURCES OF STRESSORS

**EXTER
NAL**

**INTERNAL
FACTORS**
(acting as
mediators)



THE DYNAMICS OF DISTRESS

1.

STRESSORS The **MEDIATING**

RS

FACTORS of:

EXTERNAL

INTERNAL

1. LACK OF RESOURCES or ESCAPE and

2. VULNERABILITIES OF THE SELF which are:

• PERSPECTIVE

• LIFESTYLE

• GENES together influence the:

↓
SYMPTOMS and
BEHAVIOURS of **DISTRESS**

* =



3. THE STRESSORS OF BEING A PHYSICIAN

Is my job driving me crazy?

What is my **purpose and significance** as a physician?

Let us Ask:

- Who am I?
- How do I want to matter?
- What type of **legacy** do I want to leave behind?
 - A MONUMENT?
 - A REPUTATION?
 - MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

What is my **purpose and significance** as a physician?

Let us ask: what gives me **fulfillment**?

THE RAT RACE? SEEKING:	BEING A HEALER? SEEKING:
Fame	A better world
Possessions	Contribution
Power	Self Denial
My “Eulogy”	My “Mission Statement”

- ‘Significance is not possible unless what we do contributes to the life of others’.

Do we believe this?

- 
- WHAT ARE THE OCCUPATIOAL HAZARDS OF BEING MEDICAL HEALERS?

THE STRESSORS OF THE NATURE OF O/G SERVICE

- “TETHERED TO THE PHONE” --- Any “me time”?
- THE “CERTAINTY OF UNCERTAINTY”
-complicated pregnancies
- THE UNPREDICTABLE SCALPEL
- what lies beneath?
- PATIENTS AND FAMILIES as if FROM “HELL”
- impossible, implacable, angry and litigious without
a cause

STRESSORS OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Undermining the doctor-patient relationship ?

- Are physicians now mostly WORKERS than owners of the means of production?
- OWNED by insurers, “Big Pharma”, equipment manufacturers and real estate owners or Public administrators?
- CONSTRAINED by politics?
- “DE-TOOLED” by bad national governance?

STRESSORS OF ORGANIZATION OF SERVICE

WORKPLACES WITH LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Lack of:

- Clear **vision and mission** statement and intent
- Clear **strategic plan**
- Administrative and technical **systems** (e.g. policies, planning, schedules, procedures, monitoring and evaluation)
- Open and empowering **leadership** (vs. tyrants, machiavellans or laissez-faire)
- Guaranteed equitable and cohesive **teamwork**
- Open and regular **communication** and meetings.
- Mechanisms for conflict management, discipline and **just protection of team members** being taken advantage of

STRESSORS FROM THE RELATIONSHIPS OF SERVICE

- **Poor team players**
- **Competition** and jealousy
- “Unrelentingly Difficult” **high conflict personalities**
- Persons lacking in **integrity**

We may ask: is my **purpose and significance** as a physician being undermined?

Am I really getting the **fulfillment of being a healer**?

THE RAT RACE? SEEKING:	BEING A HEALER? SEEKING:
Fame	A better world
Possessions	Contribution
Power	Self Denial
My "Eulogy"	My "Mission Statement"

- Am I experiencing the Significance of making an adequate and stress free contribution to the life of others?.



What about the stressors of life:

a) in general, and

b) during its stages?

WATCH YOUR HOLMES & RAHE STRESS SCALE

WHAT ARE THE "TOP TEN" STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS ?

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LCU</u>
1. Death of a Spouse	100
2. Marital Separation	65
3. Death of a Close Family Member	63
4. Personal Injury or Illness	53
5. Marriage	50
6. Loss of Job	47
7. Marital Reconciliation	45
8. Retirement	45
9. Change in Health of a Family Member	44
10. Pregnancy	40

LCU = LIFE CHANGING UNITS



Understanding the features of distress

WHAT ARE THE COMMON RESULTS OF DISTRESS ?

- SYMPTOMS : “SPACED OUT”
- LIFE STATE: “BURNT OUT”
- BEHAVIOURS: “ACTING OUT”
“WALKING OUT”

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

- **SYMPTOMS** OF BEING : “SPACED-OUT” include:
 - (a) Anxiety
 - (b) Psychosomatic Illnesses
 - (c) Depression

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

● SYMPTOMS : “SPACED OUT”

(a) Aspects of Anxiety are:

1. PHYSICAL:

- MUSCLES IN EVERY PART OF THE BODY CAN BECOME TENSE

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL:

- FEARFULNESS AND PANIC

3. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EXHAUSTION

4. SPIRITUAL

- LOSS OF SECURITY, MEANING AND DIRECTION
- MAGICAL SOLUTIONS

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

● SYMPTOMS : “SPACED OUT”

(b) Examples of **Psychosomatic illnesses** include:

- ASTHMA
- STOMACH ULCER
- HYPERTENSION / DIABETES
- IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME
- IMMUNE RESISTANCE

MOST PHYSICAL DISORDERS HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

- **SYMPTOMS : “SPACED OUT”**

(c) Aspects of Depression include:

1. PHYSICAL

- insomnia
- loss of appetite and energy

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL

- sadness
- pessimism
- indecision
- hopelessness
- suicidal thoughts
- irritability
- loss of interest and drive
- difficulty in concentration

3. SPIRITUAL

- feeling empty, abandoned and unforgiven
- apathy

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

- **LIFE STATE : “BURNT OUT”**

- **Features of Burnout include:**

- FATIGUE

- DEMOTIVATION

- DEMORALIZATION

- NEGATIVISM

- “TO BE AWAY FEELS BETTER”

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

BEHAVIOURS : “ACTING OUT”

Acting out includes:

ABUSE OF

- SELF



Overwork

Suicide

- SUBSTANCES



Food

Drugs

- SEX & MONEY

- OTHERS

COMMON DISTRESS RESULTS

BEHAVIOURS OF “WALKING OUT”

include:

- EXCESSIVE SICK LEAVE
- UNDERPERFORMANCE
- RESIGNATION AND MIGRATION

-



4. JOB DISTRESS RESOLUTION

- 
- How can we resolve our distress?
 - Does our work have to make us crazy?

REMEMBER THE DYNAMICS OF DISTRESS

1.

STRESSORS The **MEDIATING**

RS

FACTORS of:

EXTERNAL

INTERNAL

1. LACK OF RESOURCES or ESCAPE and

2. VULNERABILITIES OF THE SELF which are:

• PERSPECTIVE

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↓
SYMPTOMS and
BEHAVIOURS of **DISTRESS**

* =

We can use

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – for distress care
- PERSPECTIVE CHANGE – to be less vulnerable
- PROBLEM SOLVING - for stressors, resources and
escape

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE through:

1. SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT
(ventilate to someone!)
2. COMFORTING AND REASSURING SELF
(build hope)
3. RELAXING AND CENTERING

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

Seek **PERSPECTIVE CHANGE** through

1. **NORMALIZING** (“Life can be unfair”. “It happens to others”)
2. **CONFRONTING NEGATIVE THINKING**
with positive reframing
3. **SELF-CONFRONTATION**: Problem-Diagnosis
 - Is it me?
 - Mindset?
 - Martyrdom?
 - Making other people’s problem my own?
 - Guilt?
 - Is my organization sick?
 - Is there something I am missing?

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

PERSPECTIVE CHANGE

3. STOPPING CO-DEPENDENCY

BREAK CODEPENDENCY HABITS

(SELF DESTRUCTIVENESS from “ LOVE HUNGER” and
COMPENSATION FOR EARLY EMOTIONAL DEPRIVATION)

These can include:

- MARTYRDOM
- ENABLING ABUSERS
- OVERWORK “ADDICTIVENESS”

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

PERSPECTIVE CHANGE

3. STOPPING CO-DEPENDENCY

BREAK CODEPENDENCY HABITS

:

- For MARTYRDOM ---- set boundaries
- For ENABLING ABUSERS ----- be calmly assertive
- For OVERWORK “ADDICTIVENESS”\

do work PACING through

- prioritizing + “backward planning” (self care first!)
- postponement or delegating

DISTRESS RESOLUTION SKILLS

Carry out **PROBLEM SOLVING** through

1. IDENTIFY *ing* the PROBLEM
2. GOAL SETTING
3. BRAINSTORMING OPTIONS (Think outside the box)
4. PREDICTING OUTCOMES
5. DECIDING (CHOOSING an OPTION)
6. EVALUATING

WHAT ARE THE **RED FLAGS** FOR PROFESSIONAL HELP?

- GET PROFESSIONAL HELP IF WE FIND THAT:
- 1. Our work or general functioning is significantly affected
- 2. We have significant psychological distress pain and symptoms
- 3. We have physical health problems worsened by emotions. Or new physical symptoms
- 4. our “acting out” is destructive
- 5. Our Problem solving attempts are is not working out



5. BUILDING RESILIENCY

FOR FUTURE MENTAL WELLNESS IN THE
WORKPLACE



**HOW CAN WE BECOME MORE
RESILIENT FOR THE FUTURE?**



We need to

Set **TARGETS FOR PREVENTIVE CHANGE:**

1. Building healthy lifestyles

2. Using Specific life management tools



Healthy lifestyles – why do they matter for mental wellness?

The Whole Person Wellness Model

□ Utilises a **Whole Person** understanding of wellness and disease

□ This is an **integrative or dynamic** model based on “**harmony**” or balance

□ Two basic tenets:
1. Wellness is Whole Person Harmony
2. Harmony comes from Healthy Lifestyles

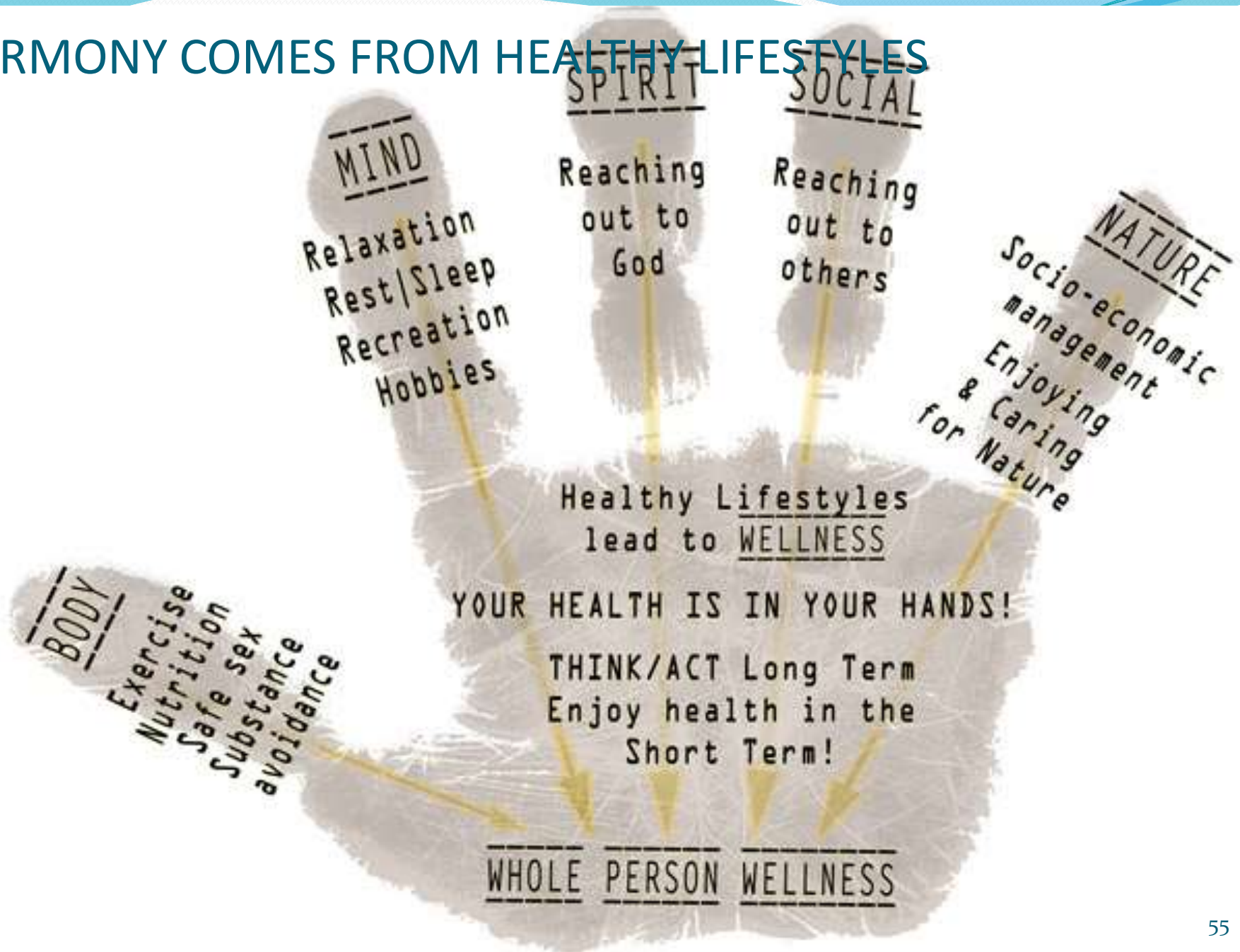
1. WELLNESS IS "WHOLE PERSON" HARMONY



- HEALTH OR WELLNESS IS
WHOLENESS
OR **HARMONY** BETWEEN:
1. aspects of the self
- (mind, body and spirit)
 2. self and others
 3. self and the natural environment
 4. self and God or a "Higher Power"

**All these aspects of self and life *interact*.
If one is affected, all are affected**

HARMONY COMES FROM HEALTHY LIFESTYLES





Thus

DISHARMONY EQUALS DISEASE

Harmony is upset: **An ailment in any dimension** of the person negatively affects, and is negatively affected by, ailments **in all other dimensions**. **The Whole person is ill.**




➤ **Mental stress influence chronic physical diseases**

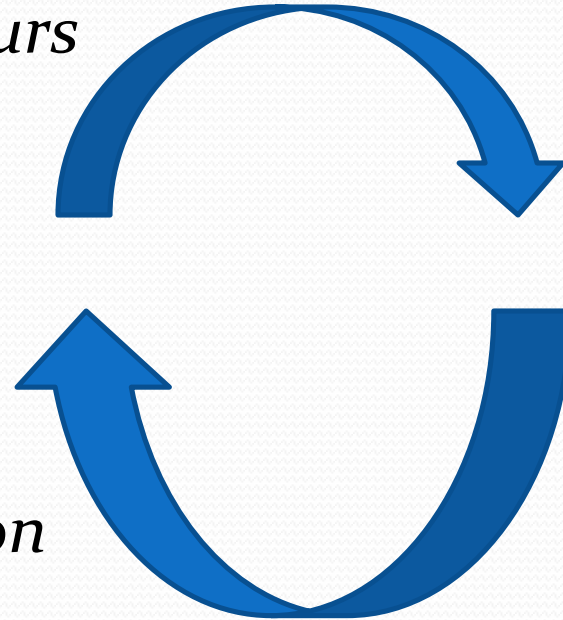
- autonomic effects
- endocrine effects
- immune system

➤ **Physical diseases can promote mental stress**

- disability & expense
- demoralization
- affecting brain function

- 
- **Either set of illnesses can worsen each other**
 - **Both mental stress and physical illnesses can undermine the *social* and *spiritual* dimensions**
 - social interactions, spiritual disciplines & hope
 - ***Social* and *spiritual* dimensions influence the mental and physical**

- *A multidirectional vicious cycle of disharmony or disease development occurs*



- *A Cascade of deterioration results*

**ANY IMBALANCE or disharmony? NO
WELLNESS!**

DISEASE BEGINS WITH LIFESTYLE NEGLECT

In any dimension

Lifestyle Neglect engenders **Health Risks** leading to **Ailments**

```
graph LR; LN[Lifestyle Neglect] -- engenders --> HR[Health Risks]; HR -- leading to --> A[Ailments]; LN --> U[upsets the balance of harmony]; HR --> U; A --> U;
```

Each, in its own way thus **upsets the balance of harmony** between all dimensions and (sooner or later)

leads to the **“Downward Spiral”** of disease

HARMONY EQUALS WELLNESS

- *Any integrity in one dimension strengthens the integrity of others*
- *This begins a multidirectional virtuous cycle towards whole person harmonizing*

- *Integrity in all dimensions leads to a “Magnificent Healing synergy – a cascade of whole person wellness*



**MOVEMENT TOWARDS WHOLE PERSON BALANCE or
harmony? ALL WELLNESS EVENTUALLY!**

WELLNESS BEGINS WITH HEALTHY LIFESTYLE SELF-CARE

Self care in each dimension:

- 1. *removes risks* to ailments in that dimension of the person which
- 2 *promotes the integrity* of all other dimensions

This drives an “Upward Spiral” of

Wellness of the Whole person”

WELLNESS IS IN YOUR HAND – through healthy lifestyles







What about specific life management tools?

Last but not least!

Use Specific Life Management Tools

1. Build Relationship **Support Groups**

Family, Friends, Faith congregation, **Professional Peers**

2. Find and be a **Peer Counsellor** and **Accountability partner**

3. Get business/practice/ work management **Coaching**

Money, Time, Risk protection, Building healthy organizations,

4. Seek **Healing of Self**: Temperament; Integrity; Lifestyle compliance

Prayer and Spiritual counselling

Professional therapy for emotions / lifestyle coaching etc.

5. Ensure “**Higher Power time**” and “**Me time**”

6. Use Paper : **Journaling**, **Life planning** and **self-monitoring tools**

7. Read **Life management books** and “**Google**”

8. Become advocates for “**healthy healthcare institutions**”


SUMMARY

1. THE EMPOWERED PHYSICIAN
2. UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND DISTRESS
3. THE STRESSORS OF BEING A PHYSICIAN
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For us who serve,

our ultimate task is to be
self-empowered
so that
we can
empower others



Empowering
self and others requires
inner strength



This inner strength is
MENTAL WELLNESS

- As empowered physicians our **purpose and significance** is not to be in a rat race, but to be healers
 - for a better world, contribution and self-denying service.
- Let us not allow stressors due to the **nature, conditions, organizational culture and relationships related to our service** undermine our purpose, significance and the fulfillment thereof.

let us seek to confront these along with the **mediating factors** of resource deficits and vulnerabilities of self

Let us conquer the spacing out, burning out and acting out of distress

through the use of :

- emotional intelligence for self care
- perspective change and
- problem solving



Let us build resiliency for our future wellness through:

- healthy emotional lifestyles; and
- the use of specific life management tools

MENTAL WELLNESS

A state of well-being in which every individual

- realizes his or her own *potential*,
- can cope with the normal *stresses* of life,
- can work *productively and fruitfully*,
- and is able to make a contribution to his or her *community*.



**CAN WE ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE
MENTAL WELLNESS
AS PHYSICIANS ?**



YES WE CAN !



THANK YOU

