Addressing and Preventing Burnout

The relationship between health care providers' motivations and burnout

The 3 pillars of intrinsic motivation that can help health care providers feel fulfilled within the workplace[1]:

1. **Autonomy:** Having choice and control over work

2. **Competence:** Feeling valued for their medical knowledge and clinical judgment

3. **Relatedness:** Having a psychological feeling of belonging, interpersonal attachments among coworkers, and connection to the organization

Ideas to decrease the burden of electronic health records among health care providers[2]

- Review electronic health records (EHR) to optimize workflow such as using a "top-of-license" approach for EHR documentation to reduce nonessential tasks or reassign them to other staff

- Reduce hospital or practice-specific customization of the EHR to make it easier to use, to avoid over-complicating the system, and to reduce the need for frequent system maintenance

- Increase user familiarity and effectiveness of the EHR by providing ongoing training to health care providers and staff on how to use the EHR system

Different approaches to prevent burnout

Programs at the individual level:

- Create programs that educate health care providers about burnout earlier in their training or orientation and teach them how to maintain their well-being

  - An example is the University of North Carolina's model called the "Art of Oncology Curriculum" that had the goal of mitigating burnout through fostering solidarity among hematology/oncology fellows. The program used both small and large group sessions to facilitate individual reflections and open discussions on a shared mental model of caring for patients and helping fellows understand their purpose or calling as oncologists[3]

Strategies at the organizational level:

- Provide a forum for feedback to address concerns[4]

  - The "Schwartz Rounds" is an example of a program that offers a forum for health care professionals to openly and honestly talk about the social and emotional issues around caring for patients and families[5]

- Encourage breaks that temporarily remove employees from the stressful environment[6]

- Implement engaging health and wellness programs[7]

- Decrease workload, when possible, and increase sense of job control to reduce exhaustion and cynicism[8]

Practices at the management level:

- Meet with staff each month[9]

- Discuss and deal with the emotions of recent events[10]

- Create an environment that will support well-being and sustain resilience[11]

- Implement interventions directed at individuals and the organization that are aimed at identifying stressors and reducing stress[12]

Additional resources:

- **Physician burnout: improve physician satisfaction and patient outcomes.**

- **7 steps to prevent burnout in your practice.**

- **5 simple changes to help cut doctors' EHR burdens.**

- **A review on strategies to manage physician burnout.**

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