

Physician Wellbeing: What You Need to Know *Penny Stern, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACOEM* *Occupational Medicine, Epidemiology, and Prevention* *Center for Equity of Care – Katz Institute for Women’s Health*

Objectives



Identify signs of physician distress (aka burnout)



Recognize impediments to physician well-being



Summarize strategies for reducing stress, improving sleep, and engaging in exercise

A dark blue, irregularly shaped graphic with a splatter effect, containing white text. The graphic is centered on a white background and has a rough, hand-painted appearance with some lighter blue and white splatters around its edges.

Let's not call it
'burnout'

“Don’t call it
burnout”

[https://www.youtube.co
m/watch?v=L_1PNZdHq
6Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_1PNZdHq6Q)

Symptoms of 'Burnout'

1. Exhaustion



“ I don't know how much longer I can keep going...”

2. Depersonalization



*Cynicism, sarcasm, venting
“compassion fatigue”*

3. Lack of efficacy



“What's the use?”

Key factors

- *Excessive workload*
- *Work inefficiencies*
- *Lack of support*
- *Decreased autonomy, control*
- *Values and meaning lost*



Family Responsibilities



Time Pressure



EHR



Chaotic Environment



Low Control
of Pace

You are unique*



- Patient care is stressful, but YOUR job is unique
 - personal call rotation
 - compensation formula
 - personality clashes in your department/clinic/team
- So-called 'work-life balance' (better known as work-life integration)
- Traits responsible for success as physicians can set us up for burnout later
- If you do not put yourself and your needs first (when you're not with patients) burnout is inevitable



Recognizing the problem in yourself or others

- Loss of enjoyment and inspiration in your work
- Negative attitude, defensive posture
- Loss of personal efficacy
- Feeling tired and depleted



*So, what can
we do about it
NOW?*

Improving Well-being

- Flexible schedules
- Help with EHR entry (improve face-to-face time with patients)
- Meetings focused on work life issues
- Reducing required activities and allowing for aRVUs
- Floating clinicians to handle unexpected needs



Improving Well-being

- Take strategic breaks
- Get adequate sleep
- Limit alcohol
- Exercise!





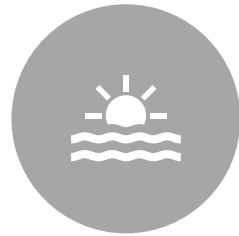
Why sleep?

- Sleep deficits are linked to:
 - accidents
 - anger and relationship problems
 - forgetfulness
 - depression
 - driving accidents
- Heart disease, diabetes, obesity risks are all higher in the chronically sleep-deprived
- **Limit alcohol** because alcohol consumption while initially sedating, prevents deeper sleep and increases arousals at night

How to Improve Sleep



REGULARITY OF
SLEEP AND
WAKE TIMES



LET THE
SUNSHINE IN!



WORK IT (AND IT
DOESN'T TAKE
MUCH!)

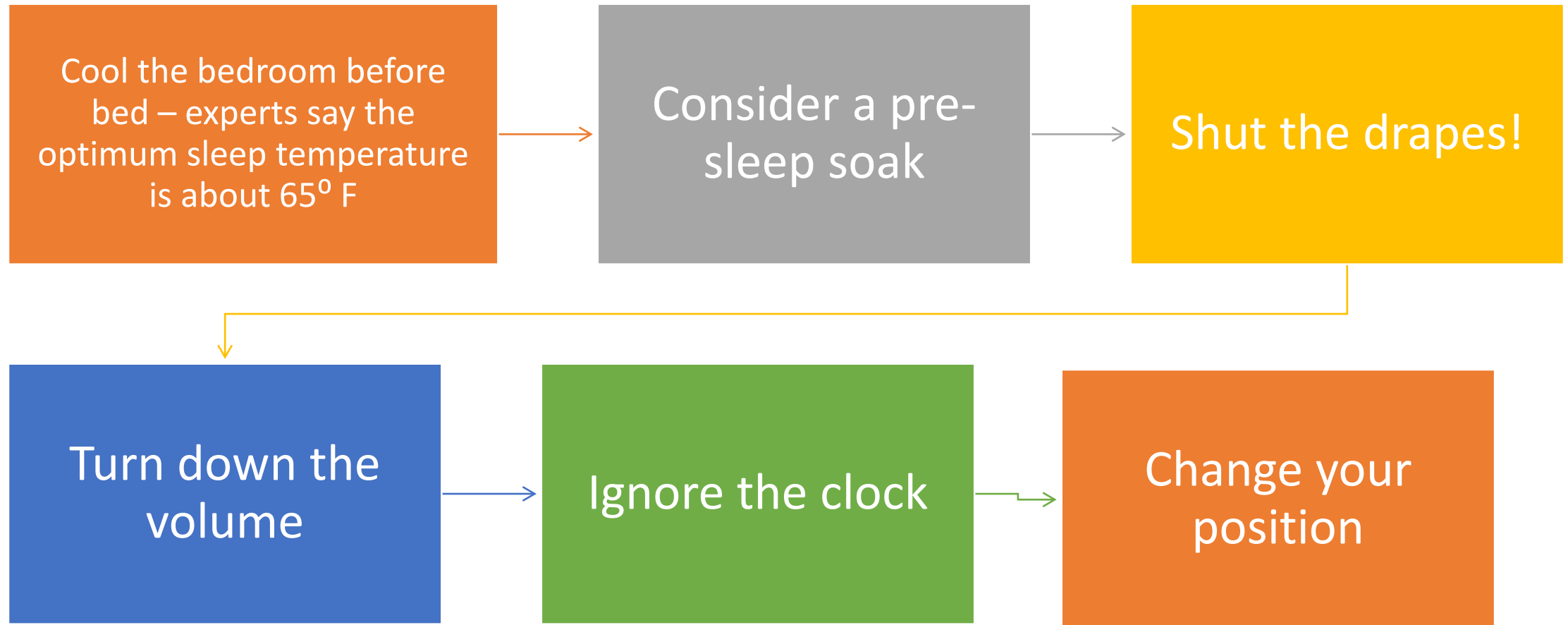


WIND DOWN IN
THE HOUR
BEFORE SLEEP



AVOID EXCESSIVE
WAKEFUL TIME IN
BED

How to Improve Sleep (cont'd)



Why Exercise?

Strengthens muscles

Makes you feel good (endorphins!)

Do something for yourself

Lubricates joints

Helps you sleep better

Gives you more energy

Lowers blood pressure

Lowers stress

Reduces chronic inflammation

Sharpens concentration

Reduces risks for diabetes, heart disease, and cancer

Signs of Mental Stress

Irritability

Intolerance

Short Temper

Exhaustion

Lack of concentration

Inability to make decisions

Increased errors

Frustration over minor challenges

Physical signs of stress

- Rapid heartbeat
- Headache
- Stiff neck and/or tight shoulders.
- Backache
- Rapid breathing
- Sweating and sweaty palms
- Upset stomach, nausea, or diarrhea
- Sleep trouble
- Fatigue
- Weakening of the immune system



In a nutshell, what can you do?



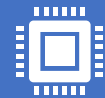
Self-management – sleep, exercise, nutrition



Time management – goals, important versus urgent



Change management – change should not overwhelm



Technology management – to serve you, not abuse you



Leisure management – rest, relaxation, varying activities

Improving Well-being



Connect

Connect with colleagues and friends (Connect the Docs!)



Make

Make time for personal interests

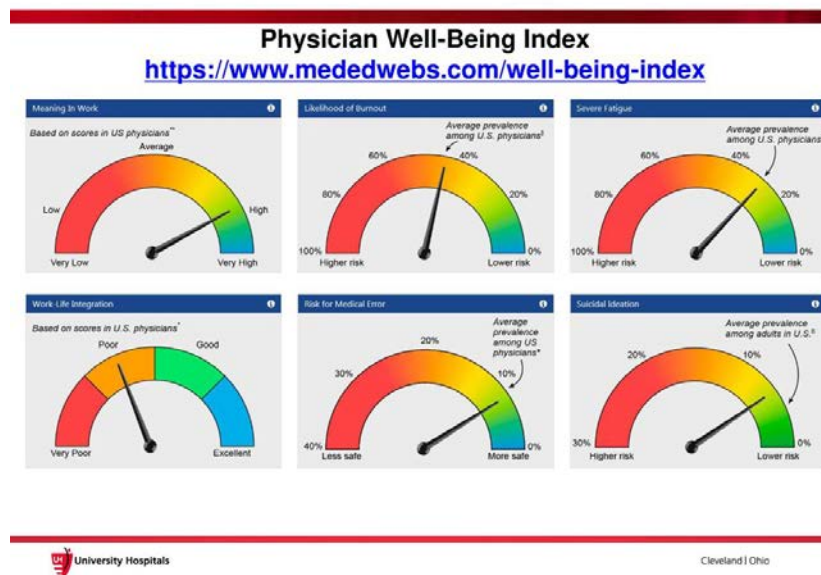


Discuss

Discuss issues at work that can be mitigated or eliminated

Try the Physician Well-Being Index

<https://www.mededwebs.com/well-being-index>





**THE BEST
PROJECT
YOU'LL EVER
WORK ON IS
YOU**



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