

Leading in Times of Trauma: Helping Frontline Heroes Cope with Burnout

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Disclosure Statement

Helen Sairany has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.

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None of the planners for this activity have relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the psychological impact of COVID-19 on pharmacists.
- Identify the multiple factors, including vicarious trauma, work-related conditions, and compassion fatigue that can lead to exhaustion and burnout among pharmacists.
- Discuss effective strategies that can be employed by pharmacies and pharmacist staff to prevent burnout and ensure staff wellbeing.

Assessment Question One

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- C. Is not associated with either increased or decreased risk of error
- D. May be associated with both increased or decreased risk of error

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Psychologist define resilience as

- A. A dynamic process encompassing positive adaption in the face of adversity
- B. The interaction between cognition and emotion
- C. A mindfulness practice involving deep spiritual connection
- D. The outcome of a series of strategies designed to minimize interactions with others.

Assessment Question Three

Those at highest risk of occupational stress and burnout include

- A. New Graduates
- B. Male Pharmacists
- C. Those with strong religious background or convictions
- D. Individuals from traditionally disadvantaged or marginalized groups

Assessment Question Four

Which of these are included in the defining impact of trauma?

- A. Disconnects one from self, others and gut feelings
- B. Impacts brain development and distorts our world view in a negative way
- C. The wounds of trauma cases lifelong pain until addressed and healed
- D. Results in a shame-based view of the self
- E. All of the above

Assessment Question Five

Which of these are included in the defining signs and symptoms of a traumatic experience?

- A. Disaster, violence and loss
- B. Fear, horror and depression
- C. Anger, confusion and anxiety
- D. Helplessness, anxiety and memory loss.

Assessment Question Six

Which of the following would be appropriate to regulate a student or a coworker after a traumatic event?

- A. Ask them what is wrong with them
- B. Ask them what happened to them
- C. Ask them to go for a run
- D. Ask why they are acting anxious

Current State in the Profession

**We All Have Unfinished Childhood
Business**

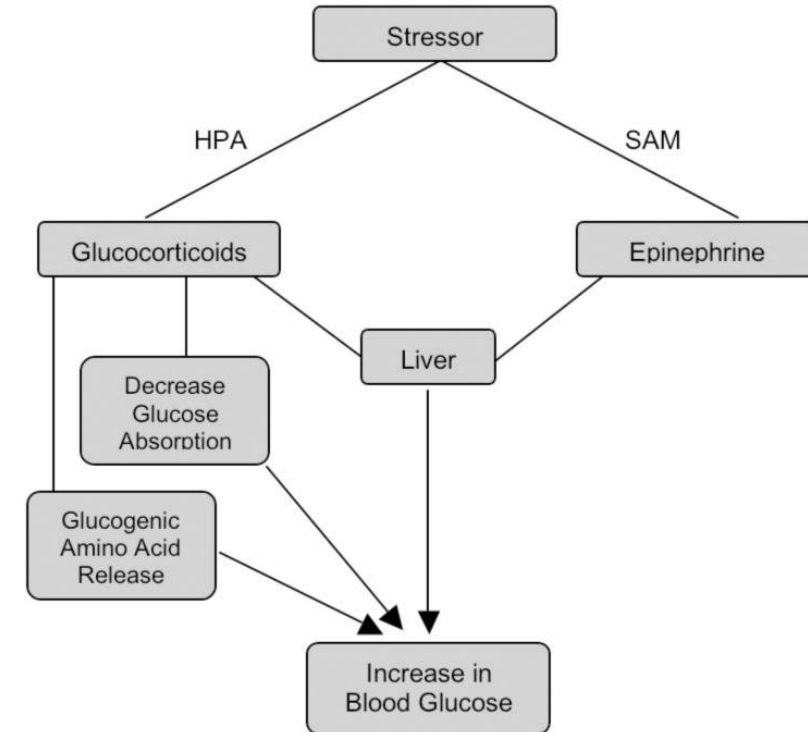
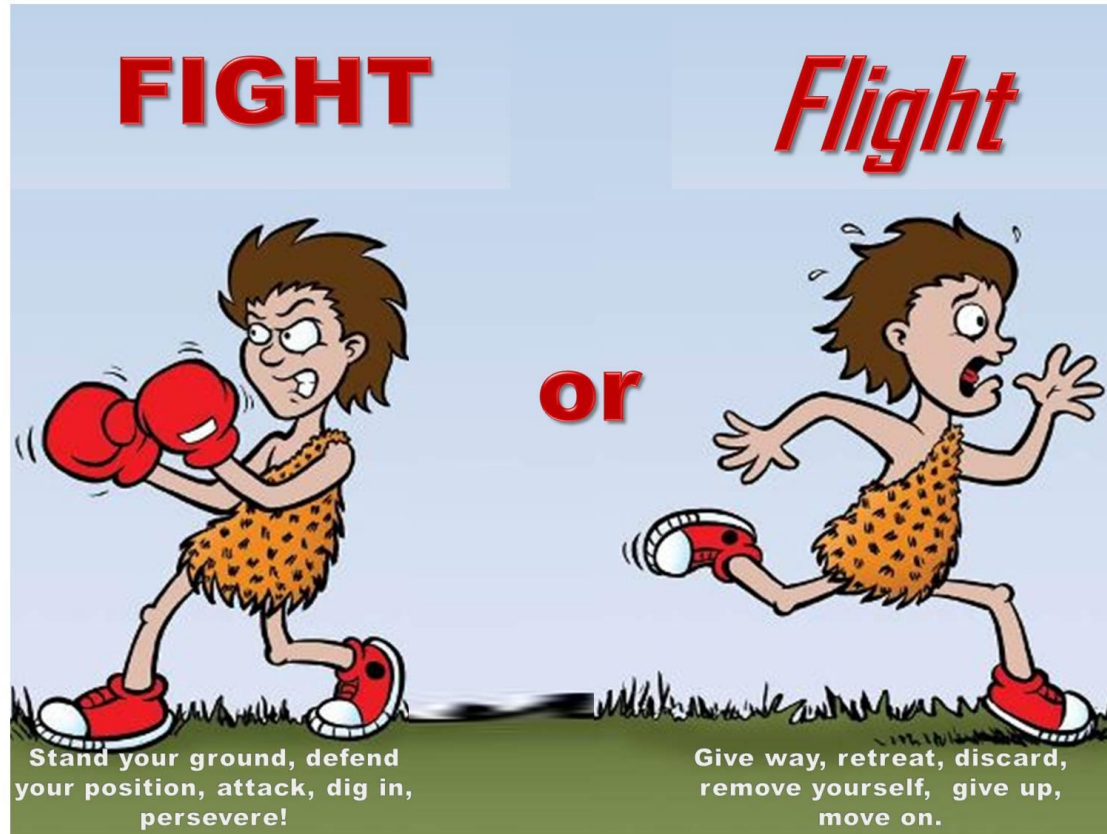
What is Trauma?

- We experience trauma when exposed to events that are too much, too soon, and too fast for our nervous systems to process.
- What Happened to You? Vs. What is Wrong with You?

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog

- “...trauma at its core is an experience of utter powerlessness and loss of control.”
- Because of the powerlessness, we fail to feel safe within our own body.
- We grow up feeling that something is off, but we are not able to put a finger on what is causing this insecurity; instead, we assume that we are the problem.

Stress Response Explained



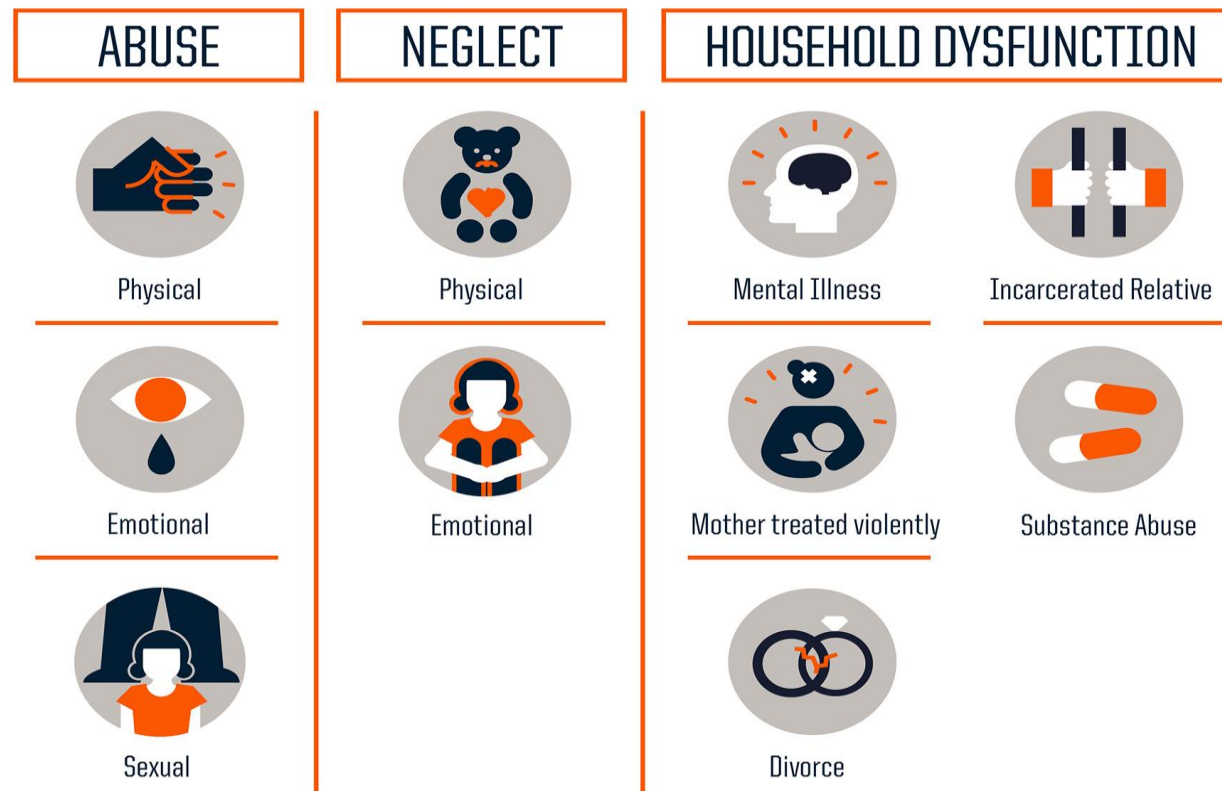
The Broken Thermostat

- When the trauma we are exposed to is too intense or frequent, the body's stress responses that was once adaptive turns maladaptive and the HPA and SAM axis systems no longer function like a thermostat.
- The axis are no longer able to turn off because our physiologic thermostat is broken, meaning every time we are exposed to trauma, our HPA and SAM systems blast us with cortisol and adrenaline.

When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress

- Gabor Mate outlines the clear connection between stress and the body's physiological response to it.
- High levels of cortisol impair our rational thinking and memory storage.
- Nadine Burke Harris: children from marginalized communities who grow up in violent, chaotic, and trauma permeated environments have impaired development of the hippocampus, which is responsible for learning and storing of memories.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Score)

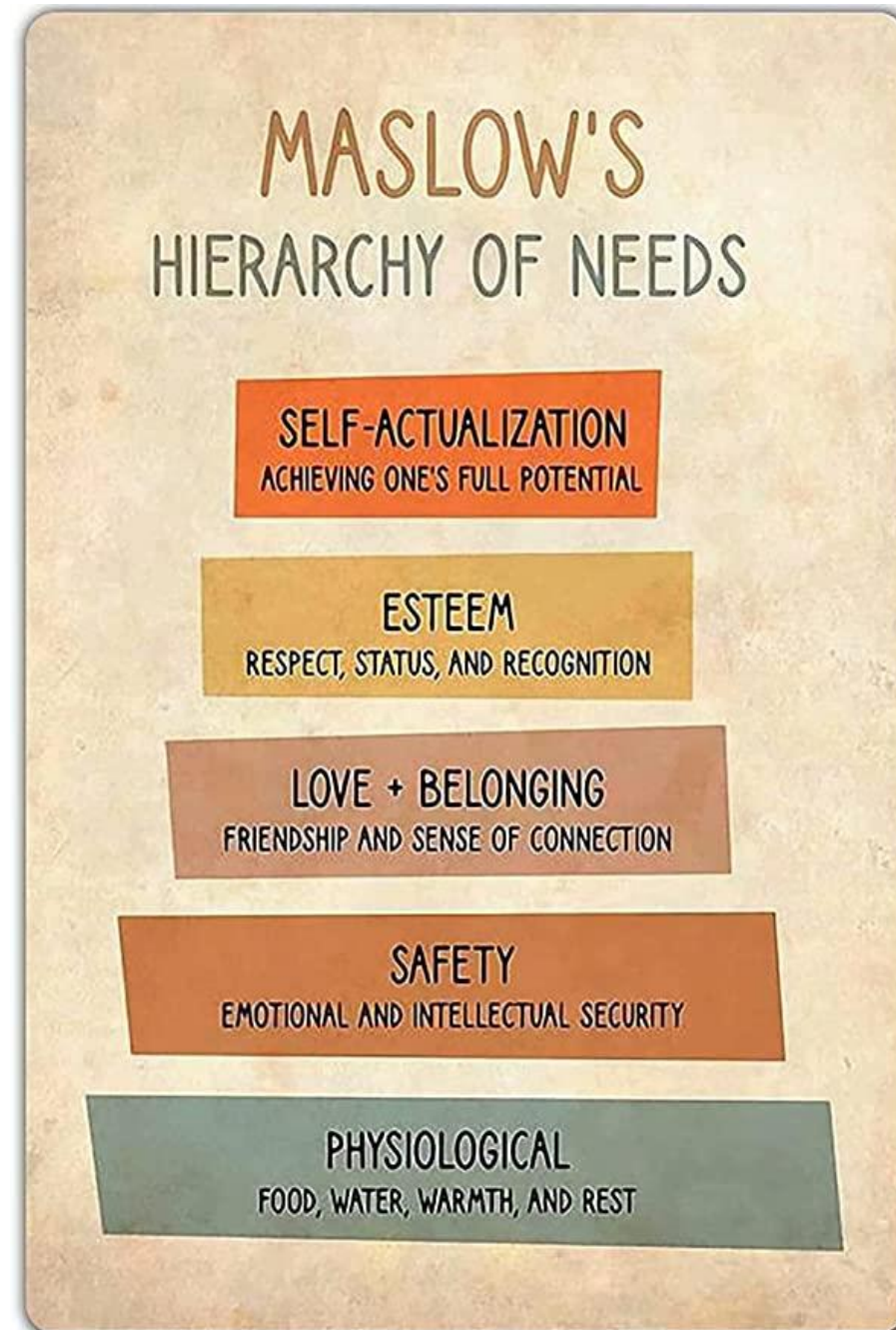


Humanizing Work

“But to the extent that their life situations violate fundamental human needs to actualize their human capacities, they will suffer physical consequences.”

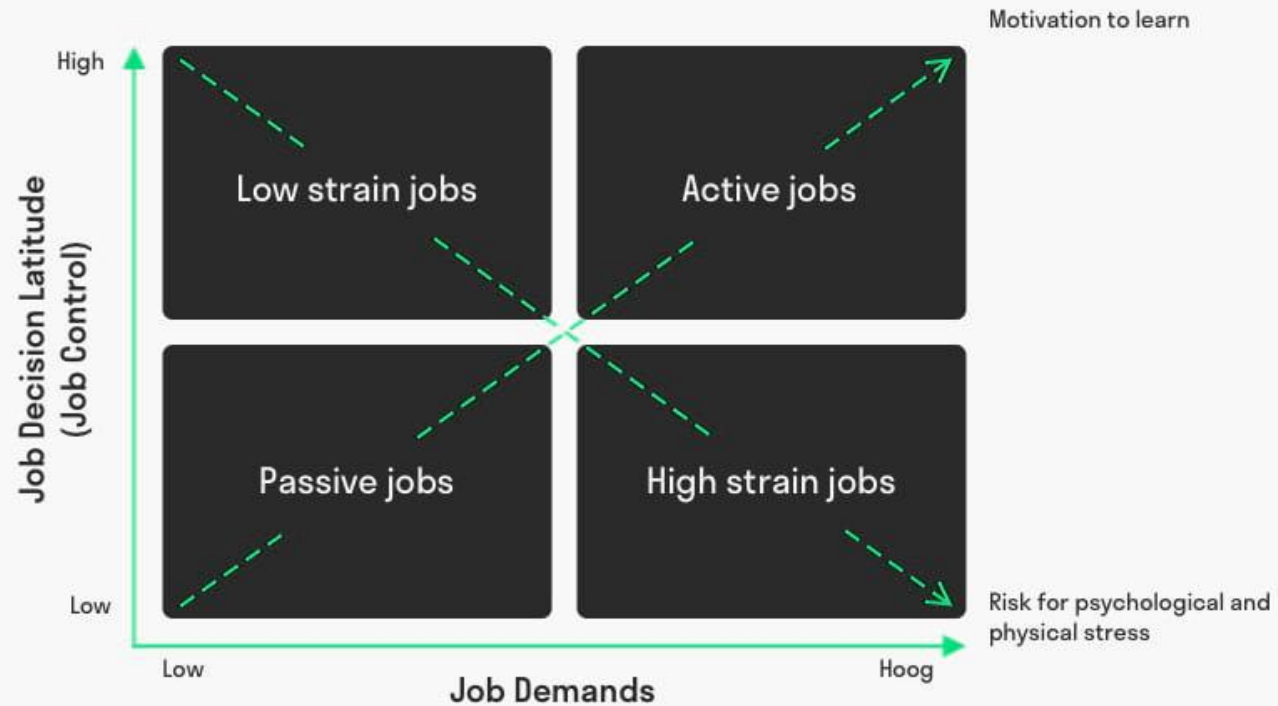
Michael Lerner, Surplus Powerlessness

Can we really
reach self-
actualization
amid crisis?



Job Demand Control Model by Robert Karasek

toolshero



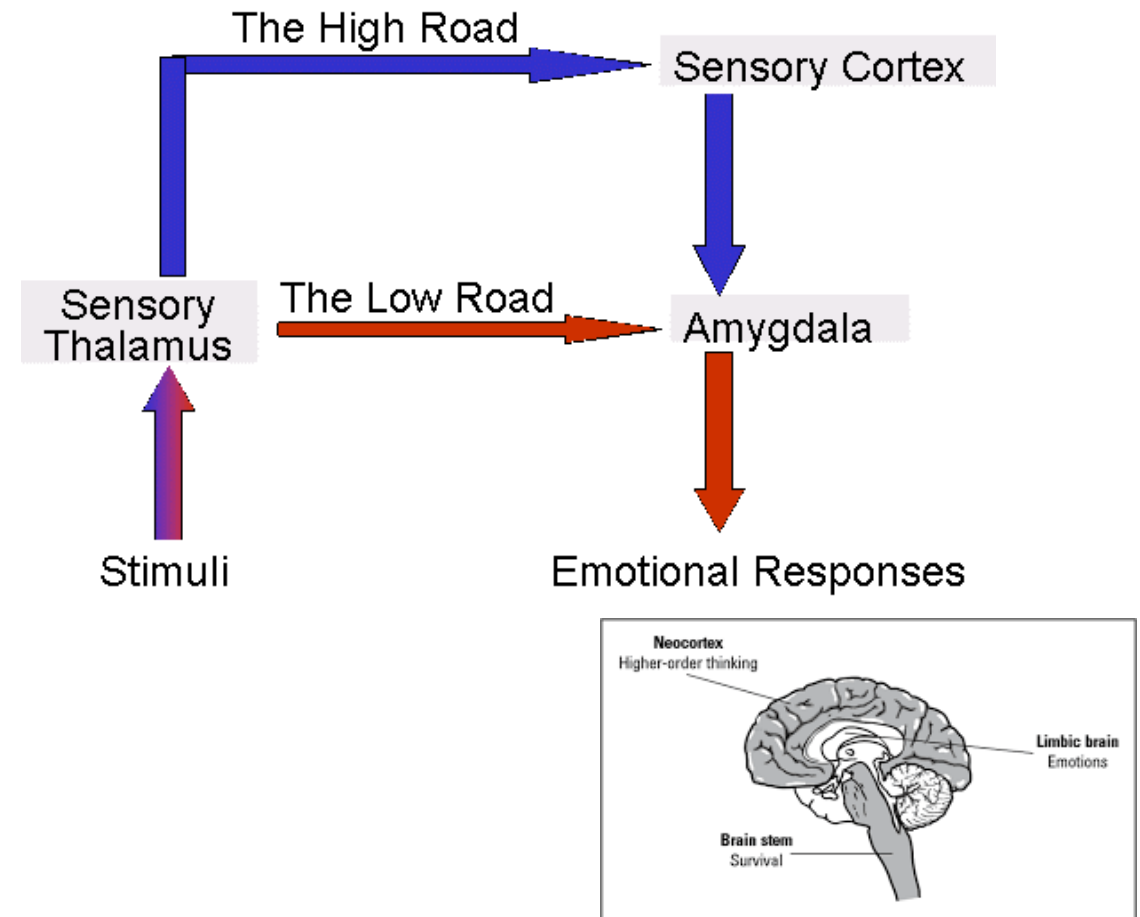
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What is Disease?

- Diseases, whether physical or mental, are normal responses to abnormal societal circumstances.
- Most chronic illnesses we see in the U.S. are the body's way of saying no, when the person has suppressed his no in order to fit in.

The Body Keeps the Score

- The Brain Anatomy: Bottom up
- Low Road vs. High Road
- At times of distress, the neocortex is overtaken by the overactive limbic system as well as the reptilian brain which puts the body in the fight or flight response.
- This is important because when we sense danger, our body uses the low road to respond to danger by running away. During trauma, people often resort to the “low road” when making decisions.



Joseph LeDoux Reports: Emotions Are “Higher-Order States”

Trauma: Disease of the Body

- Trauma produces a variety of physiological changes in the body that we feel at a visceral level.
- ***The Hyperactive Amygdala***: We become numb, scared, overwhelmed, and at times collapse to **minor triggers**.
- ***The Sloppy Amygdala***: Out of touch with their reality, feelings, bodies, and needs.
- ***The Amygdala Hijack***: This intense reaction diminishes the victim's ability to form intimate relationships, make decisions (particularly when under pressure), and often leads them to take things out of context.
- **Their behavior is often seen as neurotic or out of control.**

Trauma Separates Us from Our Bodies

“In the absence of relief, a young person’s natural response—their only response, really—is to repress and disconnect from the feeling-states associated with suffering.” –Gabor Mate

One no longer knows one’s body.

Trauma Splits Us Off from Gut Feelings.

We have gut feelings because they tell us what supports our survival and what distracts from our survival.

Trauma Limits Response Flexibility

“Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between stimulus and response and, in that pause, to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight.” – Psychologist Rollo May.

Trauma robs us of that freedom.

Trauma Fosters a Shame-Based View of Self

“Contained in the experience of shame, is a piercing awareness of ourselves as fundamentally deficient in some vital way as a human being.” – Psychologist Gershen Kaufman.

Among the most poisonous consequences of shame is the loss of compassion for oneself.

Trauma Distorts our View of the World

“The World we believe in becomes the world we live in.”

“..before the mind can create the world, the world creates our minds.”

Trauma imposes a worldview tinged with pain, fear, and suspicion: a lens that both distorts and determines our view of how things are.

Conscious Engineering



- 95% of who you are by the time you are 35 is a set of memorized behaviors, skills, emotional reactions, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes that functions like a subconscious ANS.
- 95% of our habitual thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and behavioral patterns are unconscious... we're simply not aware of all the old programs and judgments that zap us of our energy and creativity.

Conscious Engineering

- “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”

--Carl Jung

Trauma Alienates Us from the Present

“...people are desperately seeking to escape from themselves.”

If trauma entails a disconnection from the self, then it makes sense to say that we are being collectively flooded with influences that both exploit and reinforces trauma.

Trauma May Explain the Suffering of CEOs, Leaders, & Deans

- In life-related trauma, individuals are haunted by events of the past.
- In work-related trauma, individuals are haunted by intolerable fear of the future.
- Instead of flashbacks, individuals have flash-forwards of panic, which neuroscientists have shown can affect the same parts of the brain as real-life experiences.

Trauma May Explain the Suffering of CEOs, Leaders, & Deans

- Work-related trauma is exacerbated when leaders begin to ignore their own suffering and dehumanize themselves in order to “get through it.”
- By numbing to the damage that is happening, they stay in unhealthy work conditions and dysfunctional situations far longer than they should, layering damage on damage and risking dehumanizing those around them in turn.

Trauma May Explain the Suffering of Frontline Heroes

- What healthcare workers faced early in the pandemic is a type of post traumatic disorder (PTSD) called “**moral injury**,” a feeling of guilt or. Shame after having participated in an extraordinary high-stress situation that required immediate and often life-or-death decision making.

Issues

- Pharmacists are educated and trained in a culture that values self-reliance and not equipped to discuss personal vulnerability.
- Pharmacists are trained to care for others and receive no training on how to better care for themselves during times of occupational stress.

Pharmacy: The Profession of Giving!

Elevated Emotions vs. Limited Emotions



- Survival emotions are derived primarily from the stress hormones, which tend to endorse more selfish and more limited states of mind and body.
- When pharmacists embrace elevated, more creative emotions, they lift their energy to a different hormonal center.

Burnout: The Civilization Disease

- During burnout, the very first things we give up are those that nourish us the most but seem *optional*.
- The result is that we are increasingly left with only work or the stressors that often deplete our resources with nothing to replenish—exhaustion is the result

Depersonalization:

- The Most Toxic Consequence of Occupational Burnout and Stress
- We lose our ability to care—for anyone or anything.
- Its start with mild irritation leading to a lack of concern and eventually outright dismissal of our patients.

“people can be intellectually aware of the symptoms and problems associated with depersonalization, but because of emotional and cognitive overload, lack the resources to address the problem. For many individuals, the boundaries between unproductive occupational stress and outright burnout breaks down when the last vestige of care—for anyone or anything—is gone.”

COVID-19: Era of Reflection

COVID-19: Era of Re-Alignment

COVID-19: Era of Great Resignation

The Era of Great Resignation is the Era of Great Discontent

- The three most common reasons employees are disengaged at work
 - Not seeing opportunities for development.
 - Not feeling connected to the company's purpose.
 - Not having strong relationships at work.

The Era of Great Resignation is the Era of Great Discontent

- Gallup Analysis Finds:
 - 85% of Americans are unhappy with their current employment.
 - 78% of Americans are reporting work-related anxiety and panic attacks.
 - 48% of Americans are actively job searching.

Loneliness

- Loneliness is up by 300% in the United States
- Loneliness is worse than having 15 cigarette/day
- Loneliness is worse than obesity to health
- 50% of CEOs report loneliness in the United States
- Harvard Medical School Study
 - 96% of leaders feel burned out
- Harvard: Very happy People's Study
 - Our deep social connection have 0.7 correlation with happiness

**Is there such thing as Work Life
Balance?**

The Dysfunctional Family System of 21st Century

Chapman's Love Language Model

- The Attachment theory
- The dysfunctional family system of 21st century
- Each individual will have their own maximum emotional and cognitive load and their own equilibrium point at which they are sufficiently cognitively and emotional stimulated to feel positive without being bored.

What if we invest and they leave?

What if we don't invest and they stay?

Humanizing Work: Why It Matters?

Metacognition: To Know Thyself

Mindfulness, Yoga and Pranayama

- *When the alarm bell of the emotional brain (amygdala) keeps signaling that you are in danger, no amount of insight can create calm.*
- If we want to change our response to trauma, we need to develop ways to prevent our emotional brain from sending false alarms. To master trauma, it means to bring ourselves to a full awareness of the present moment, to keep us calm
- **Mindfulness: Recalibrate the Emotional Brain**
- **Yoga: Learn to love your body**
- **Pranayama: Regulate your emotional brain**

Mindfulness: Recalibrate Your Emotional Brain

- The core to recovery from stress is a thorough awareness of your feelings.
- Through mindfulness, you learn to use your brain to guide your body towards healing through the “top-down” vagal tone pathway. You learn to notice and tolerate the physical sensations when remembering the past.
- With stress/trauma being a visceral disease, we need to open ourselves to our inner experiences and focus our bodies on sensations through mindfulness.
- Mindfulness calms the SNS and we are less likely to be thrown in a fight or flight response.

Yoga: Learn to Love Your Body!

- Through yoga, you learn to empower your body and send the signals to your brain using “bottom-up” vagal tone pathway.
- Regardless of what type of yoga you practice, all include asanas (stretching and posture work) and pranayama (breath work techniques).
- Just like mindfulness, yoga improves arousal problems and relationships with the body.
- Yoga is about looking inward and listening to the things our body has to say to us, “I will listen to what my body needs,” “I love my body,” “I live in my body,” “I will honor my body,” etc.
- Yoga focuses attention on breathing and sensations with every movement. As you continue to practice, you start noticing a connection between your emotions and your body.

Pranayama: Regulate your Emotional Brain

- Learning to slowly breath in, hold, and slowly release your breath when accessing painful memories is helpful in recovery.
- As you continue taking deep breathes, you are slowing activating the PNS system, allowing you to relax and rest.

Promote a Culture of Belonging



Emotional Intelligence—EI
Cultural Intelligence—CI
Spiritual Intelligence –SI

- The Body, Mind and Soul Connection
- *Mindfulness is about coherence between what we say, what we do, what we think, and how we feel about life around us.*

- **Be the leader that you always wanted to have.**
- **Be the trauma informed leader that you always wanted to have.**
- **Be the mindful leader that you always wanted to have.**

NAMASTE!



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