strategies include problem solving, having a positive outlook, social support, and expression of emotions (Dyrbye et al., 2005).

Through-out training, medical students encounter a significant amount of stress (Dyrbye, Thomas, Shanafelt, 2005). This is an inevitable and important part of being a student: it motivates and stimulates learning. However, chronic, intense stress can arouse feelings of fear, uselessness, anger, incompetence and guilt. If it is not managed correctly, stress can lead to high levels of depression, substance abuse, relationship problems, anxiety, and suicide (Finkelstein, Brownstein, Scott, & Lan, 2007).

During medical school, students utilize various coping strategies to manage stress (Dyrbye et al., 2005). These coping strategies determine the influence that stress has on psychological and physical well-being. **Disengagement strategies** have negative consequences and are associated with depression, anxiety, and overall poor mental health. Examples of disengagement strategies include problem avoidance, social withdrawal, wishful thinking, and self-criticism. **Engagement strategies** have positive consequences and help alleviate anxiety and depression. Examples of engagement strategies include problem solving, having a positive outlook, social support, and expression of emotions (Dyrbye et al., 2005).

**Common Stressors**

- **Academic:** Adjusting to a new learning environment, increased academic workload, competition for good grades, high stakes testing, and an increased level of responsibility.
- **Clinical:** Exposure to death and dying; dealing with patient illness and stress; rotating through new hospital environments; having to deal with ethical considerations.
- **Psychological:** Having unrealistic expectations. The irrational belief that doctors should not experience anxiety, negative reactions to stress.
- **Familial:** Relationship issues with parents, children, and partners. Tensions that result from the conflicting demands of medical education and family.
- **Social:** Less interaction with friends and family and required interactions with peers and faculty.
- **Financial:** Worry over student loan debt is a common stressor.
- **Physical:** Sacrificing exercise and leisure time for long hours of lecture, studying, and clinical rotations; chronic and acute illness.
- **Spiritual:** Difficulty maintaining spiritual practices and dealing with frequent challenges to ones beliefs.
Tips for Managing Unavoidable Stress (Patient Education Institute, 2013)

1. **Plan for expected events with visualization techniques**—rehearse upcoming stressful events in your mind to better prepare and help you feel more in control.

2. **Reframe**—think positively! Put a difficult situation into a different perspective.

3. **Visualize potentially negative situations**—determine a backup plan just in case things do not go as planned.

4. **Relax with deep breathing techniques**—counteract the shallow breathing that stress creates. Breath in deeply through the nose, hold for a few seconds, and then exhale through the mouth.

5. **Quiet your mind**—focus on a peaceful thought or a happy memory.

6. **Relax tense muscles**—concentrate on purposely tensing a group of muscles, hold for a few seconds, and then release. This can help focus chaotic thoughts and release tension.

7. **Decompress with stretching and exercise**—this strategy can be done almost anywhere, at anytime.

8. **Get a massage**—massage therapy can relieve muscle tension resulting from stress.

9. **Ask for help**—this is a simple way to alleviate stress and people genuinely want to help!

10. **Seek professional help**—seek professional help before it gets out of control and results in undesirable consequences.

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**Burnout**

Burnout is a state of mental and physical exhaustion associated with work or care-giving activities (Ishak et al., 2013) and results from chronic stress that is not appropriately dealt with (Meldrum, 2010).

Burnout is characterized by:

1. **Emotional exhaustion**—loss of enthusiasm for work,
2. **Depersonalization**—treating people as if they are objects, and,
3. **Low personal accomplishment**—the feeling that work is no longer meaningful.

(Meldrum, 2010; Shanafelt, 2009).

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**Risk Factors for Burnout** (Texas Medical Association, 2000)

- Perfectionism
- Need for control
- Belief that revealing emotions makes one weak
- Type A personality: overachievers
- Unwillingness to ask for help
- Belief that physicians do not have needs
- Belief that patients should always come before one’s own health

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Stages of Burnout (as cited in Texas Medical Association, 2000)

The three stages of burnout usually occur in sequence. However, progression through the stages of burnout can be stopped at any point. Two or more of these symptoms at any stage indicates burnout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Stress Arousal</th>
<th>Stage 2: Energy Conservation</th>
<th>Stage 3: Exhaustion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Lateness, procrastination</td>
<td>Chronic sadness or depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruxism (excessive grinding of teeth)</td>
<td>Excessive time off</td>
<td>Suicidal ideation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Decreased sex drive</td>
<td>Chronic GI problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgetfulness, poor concentration</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Chronic headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI disorders</td>
<td>Social withdrawal</td>
<td>Social isolation</td>
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<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Increased substance abuse</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-medication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unethical behaviors (disruptive behavior, boundary violations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies for Preventing Burnout: Maintain Balance!

- **Maintain physical well-being**
  - **Use leisure activities to reduce stress**
  - **Set limits**
  - **Limit work hours**
- **Exercise**
- **Eat healthy**
- **Rest and maintain adequate sleep schedule**
- **Be honest with yourself and learn to forgive so that you are able to move forward after an adverse event**
- **Schedule time to take care of routine chores**
- **Learn to set priorities**
- **Schedule time-out periods for vacations, power naps, meals and snacks**
- **Reflection & Spirituality**
  - **Consistently take time to reflect on personal situations and identify needed change for the future**
  - **Regenerate with regular quiet times, meditation, prayer, journaling, religious services, spirituality practices, or time in nature**
  - **Debrief with others**
  - **Share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences with close friends, family, and colleagues**
- **Seek professional help—it is available to you and completely confidential**
- **Maintain Positive Attitudes**
  - **Acceptance and realism—refrain from wishful thinking and accept external realities**
  - **Realistic expectations—reasonably address the challenges and downsides of the medical profession**
  - **Recognize when change is necessary and maintain flexibility to make necessary changes**
  - **Appreciate the good things in life and work**
- **Humor & Laughter**
  - **A good sense of humor can help you cope with stress**
  - **Exchange jokes and humorous stories to create a positive environment**

(Meldrum, 2010; Texas Medical Association, 2000; Swetz, Harrington, Matsuyama, Shanafelt, & Lyckholm, 2009; Zwack & Schweitzer, 2013)
On Campus Resources

Reno

UNR Student Health Center
Redfield Building M/S 196
Reno, NV, 89557
Tel: 775-784-6598

Hours:
Monday through Thursday, 8am-7pm with Walk-In hours 8am-6pm
Friday, 8am-5pm with Walk-in hours 8am-4pm
Closed Wednesday 8am-9am for staff meeting
Closed on weekends and holidays

After hours:
After hours care is not available at the Student Health Center and they do not have a doctor on call. If you need to be seen emergently, please call 911 and go to the nearest Emergency Department.

UNR Counseling Services
202 Thompson Building
Reno, NV 89557
Tel: 775-784-4648
On call crisis counselor, after hours: 775-297-8315

Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 8am-8pm
Friday, 8am-8pm

Closed on weekends and holidays

if you are experiencing a crisis, you can call or walk-in to Counseling Services between the hours of 8am-5pm Monday through Friday. Let the receptionist know that you are requesting a same-day emergency appointment. A counselor will briefly meet with you to determine the best course of action (scheduling an intake appointment with you, referring you to other resources, etc.)

Las Vegas

UNLV Student Health Center
Student Recreation and Wellness center (SRWC), 1st floor
Phone: 702-895-3370

Hours:
Monday—Thursday, 8am—6pm
Friday, 9am—5pm

Closed on weekends and holidays

UNLV Counseling and Psychological Services
SRWC, enter through Student Health Center, 1st floor
Phone: 702-895-3627

Hours:
Monday—Thursday, 8am—6pm
Friday, 9am—6pm

Closed on weekends and holidays

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has on-call counselors to provide crisis intervention services on a walk-in basis during office hours. Students should come into CAPS or call at 895-3627 and tell the receptionist that they are having an emergency and need to speak to the counselor immediately.

Off Campus Resources
UNSOM Counseling Referral List—Link

"Burnout is not a condition that gets better by being ignored. Nor is it any kind of disgrace." Herbert J. Freudenberger
References


