Vernacare Hot Topics

Are We OK?
A Conversation about Healthcare Provider Mental Health and Moral Distress

Presented by: Titus Wong at IPAC Canada Conference
University of British Columbia
• discussed the mental health burden and moral distress that healthcare providers (including IPAC specialists) experience
• its impact on our patients and clients
• addressing this growing concern.
Mental Health
Burnout and Moral Distress
Call to Action
What word best describes how you feel lately?
The many symptoms of depression

- Tiredness, lack of energy
- Slow thinking, speaking, movement
- Appetite disturbance
- Cognitive impairment
- Sleep disturbance
- Unexplained physical problems
- Dysregulation, outbursts
- Feeling sad, hopeless
- Anxiety, agitation, restlessness
- Lost of interest or pleasure
- Suicidal ideation
One in five healthcare workers have moderate depression

WHY??
“... it is not a medical diagnosis, and the World Health Organization made that very clear...

It's an occupational phenomenon. So it is a stress response. Exhaustion is, in fact, part of the burnout response.”
The Drivers of Burnout are Multifactorial

Lack of Community
Work Overload
Lack of Reward
Lack of Autonomy
Lack of Fairness
Values Mismatch

Burnout Symptoms

Exhaustion
- I am so, so tired
- I am exhausted, absolutely burnt out
- I don’t want to do anything
- I need to take a stress leave
- I cry and no one cares
- My inbox is always full. I can never catch up
- There’s not enough nurses to manage all the patients
- I feel slow
- I can’t ask my staff to do more
- If I go on vacation, I’ll have a mountain of work to return to

Cynicism & Depersonalization
- I hate my job
- I used to care, I don’t, anymore
- Senior leadership is just saying things and nothing ever really changes
- It’s just a job
- It doesn’t matter how hard I try, nothing changes here

Reduced Productivity
- We worked so hard through the pandemic and everyone’s forgotten about us
- I have trouble concentrating
- I feel slow
- I can’t ask my staff to do more
- If I go on vacation, I’ll have a mountain of work to return to

What’s new? I got divorced
- What are the execs doing for us?
- I don’t think anyone is looking out for us
- I cry and no one cares
Be intentional about connecting


Acknowledge (without judgment) others’ actions
Be open, honest, consistent and be fair in relationships

Respect others
Be transparent
Follow through
Lack of Autonomy

Message to the Leaders

- Value and Protect Healthcare workers’ physical and psychological wellbeing
- Promote initiatives to allow clinicians to practice at the top of their specialty
- Increase access to counseling and mental health care
- Strengthen investment in the healthcare workforce
- Strengthen organizational commitment to a culture of wellbeing, make it a priority, make the issue visible at the executive level
Always end the day with a positive thought. No matter how hard things were, tomorrow’s a fresh opportunity to make it better.

~Unknown
Thank you to SASKPIC for the opportunity to attend the 2023 IPAC Canada Conference.