

Burnout in Anesthesia: Strategies for Sustainable CRNA Practice

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Objectives

- By the end of this presentation, attendees will:
- Understand the definition and prevalence of burnout in nurse anesthesia.
- Recognize key risk factors contributing to burnout.
- Explore real-world case studies of CRNA burnout.
- Learn evidence-based strategies for prevention and resilience.

What is Burnout?



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- Definition: Chronic workplace stress leading to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach Burnout Inventory).
- CRNA-Specific Factors:
- High-stakes decision-making
- Long shifts & irregular schedules
- Emotional toll of patient outcomes

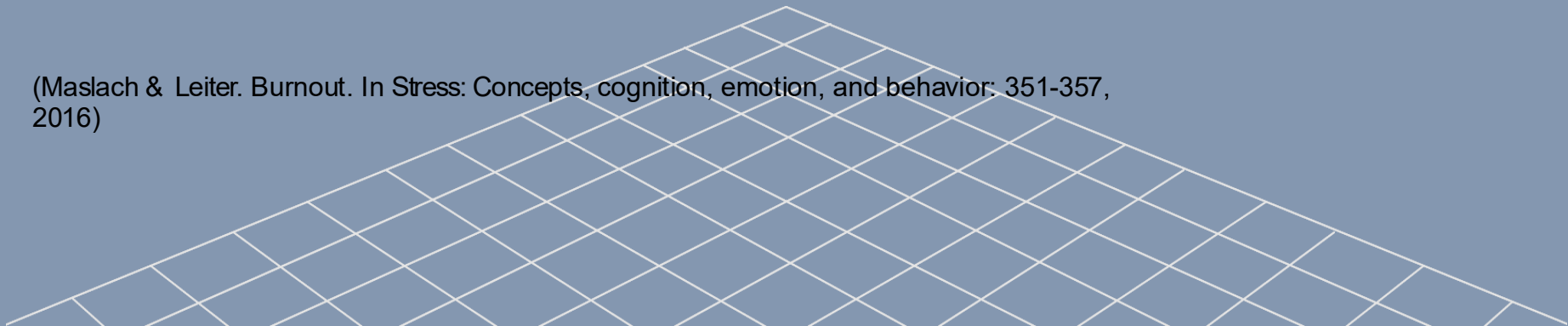
Understanding Burnout



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- Psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic stressors on the job
- 3 key features:
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job
 - Sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment
- Early burnout measure based on comprehensive program of psychometric research was the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

(Maslach & Leiter. Burnout. In Stress: Concepts, cognition, emotion, and behavior: 351-357, 2016)



The consistent practice of asking specific questions of key stakeholders—leaders, employees, clinicians, and patients—to obtain actionable information.

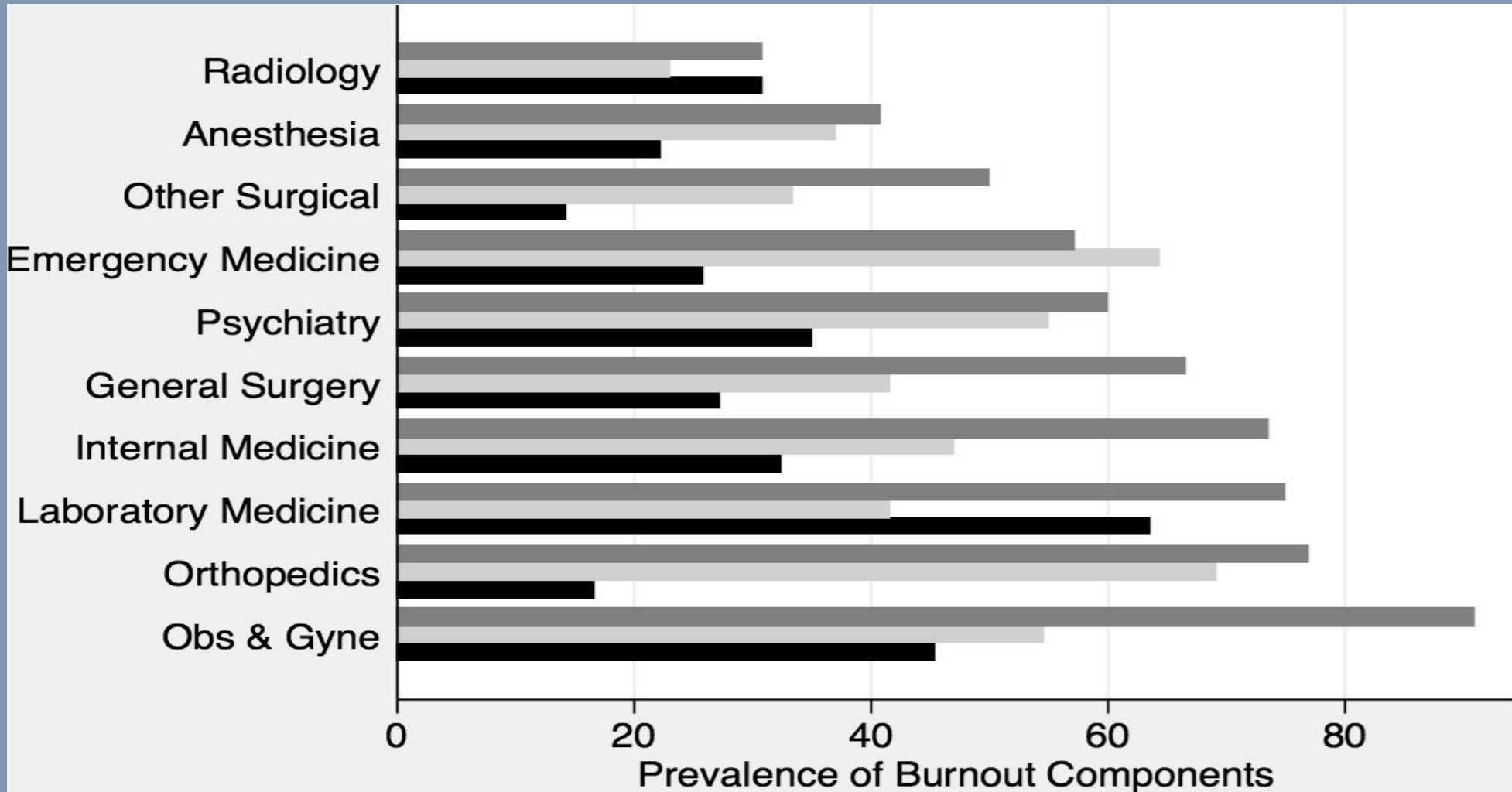
The focus of questions during rounding are to:

- **Build relationships** ("How is your family?" "Did your daughter graduate last week?")
- **Harvest "wins" to learn what is going well**, what is working, and who has been helpful ("Are there any clinicians I need to recognize today?")
- **Identify process improvement areas** ("What systems can be working better?")
- **Repair and monitor systems** to ensure chronic issues have been resolved ("Do you have the tools and equipment to do your job?")
- **Ensure that key behavior standards in the organization are "hardwired"** (or being consistently executed) to reward those who are following the standards and coach those who are not

Prevalence of Burnout in Nurse Anesthesia

- Statistics:
- ~40-50% of CRNAs report burnout symptoms (AANA, 2023).
- Higher rates in high-acuity settings (ICUs, trauma centers).

Bar Chart Comparing Burnout Rates Across Medical Professions.



Causes of Burnout in Nurse Anesthesia

- Workload & Staffing Shortages
- Case Study: A CRNA in a rural hospital covering 24-hour call with no relief.
- Emotional & Ethical Stress
- Example: Managing intraoperative complications leading to moral distress.
- Lack of Autonomy & Support

The tale of two CRNA's



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The “Physicians Personality”

- Adaptive
 - Diagnostic rigor
 - Thoroughness
 - Commitment to patients
 - Desire to stay current
 - Perfectionism*
 - Obsessional*
- Maladaptive
 - Difficulty relaxing
 - Problem allocating time for family
 - Sense responsibility beyond what you control
 - Sense “not doing enough”
 - Difficulty setting limits
 - Confusion of selfishness vs. health self-interest
 - Difficulty taking time off

Disproportionately Impacted by Burnout



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- Healthcare workers of color
- Immigrant healthcare workers
- Female healthcare workers
- Healthcare workers in rural communities
- Healthcare workers in tribal communities
- Low wage healthcare workers

Overworked CRNA



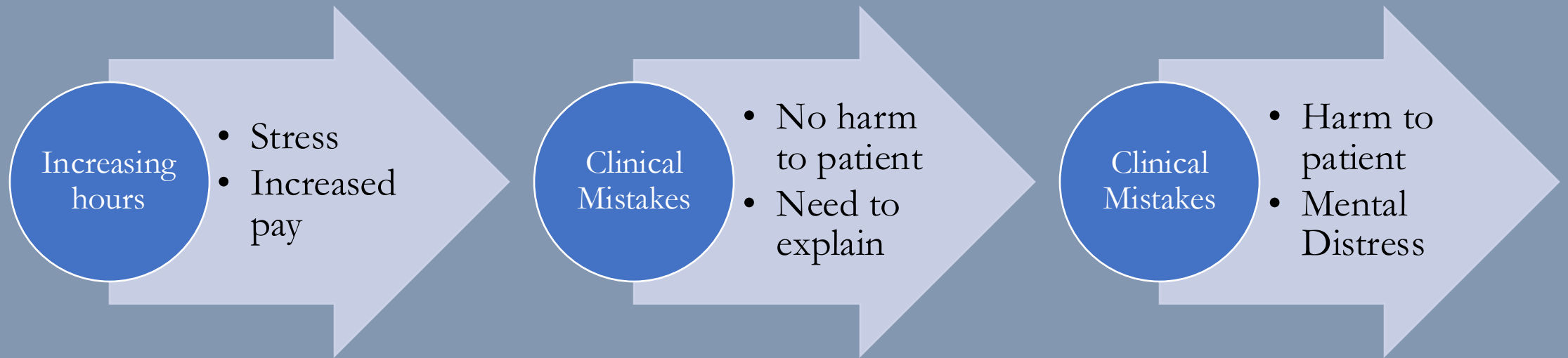
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- Scenario: A CRNA in a busy urban OR works 60+ hours/week, experiences sleep deprivation, and starts making minor errors.
- Outcome: Near-miss medication error → forced leave for mental health recovery.
- Lesson: Importance of workload management and self-awareness.

Events Leading to Burnout



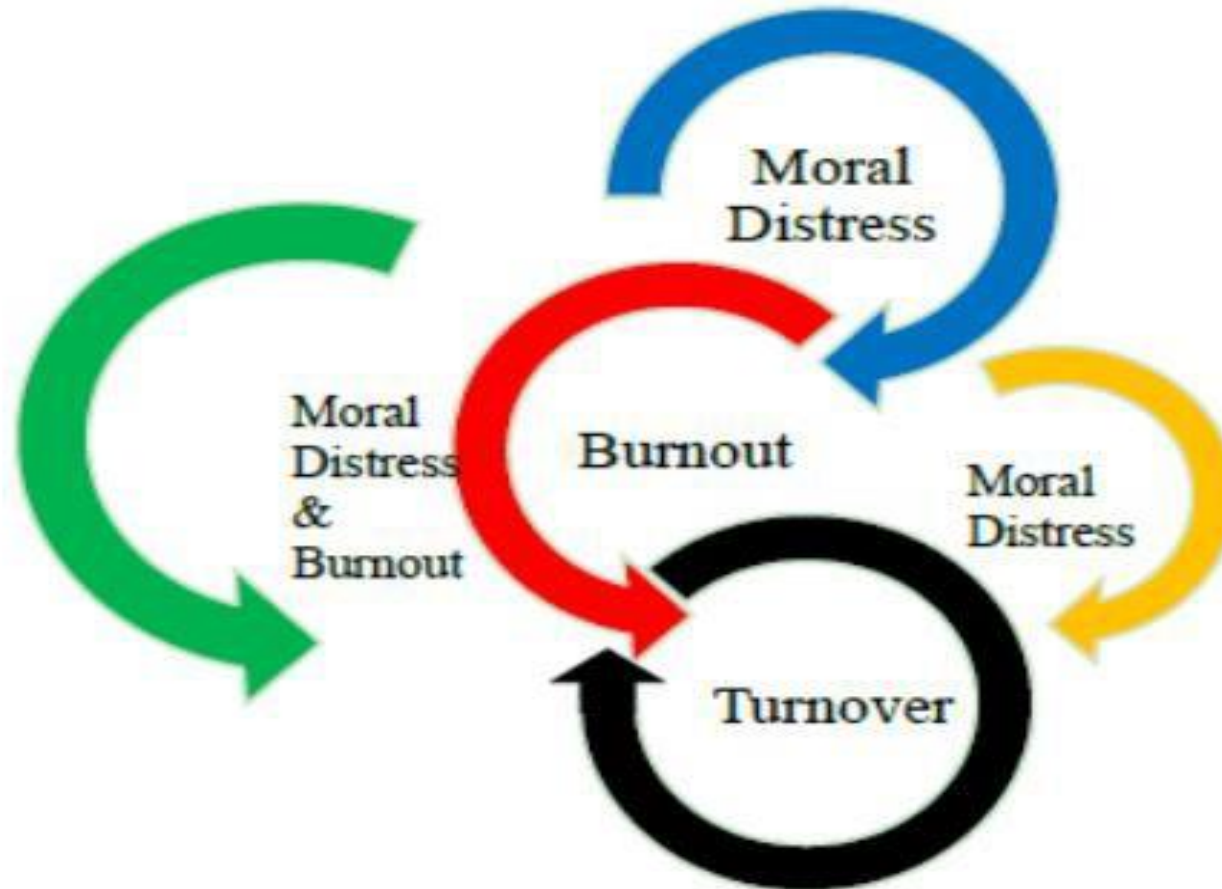
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Moral Distress



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Moral Injury in Nurse Anesthesia

- Scenario: A pediatric CRNA repeatedly sees preventable anesthesia complications due to systemic hospital failures.
- Outcome: Develops cynicism, leaves the profession early.
- Lesson: Need for institutional support and debriefing protocols.

Our Moral Compass



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“I couldn’t
continue to
watch patients
suffer”



Signs and Symptoms of Burnout



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- Physical: Chronic fatigue, headaches, insomnia.
- Emotional: Irritability, detachment, depression.
- Professional: Decreased performance, absenteeism.

Consequences of Burnout

- For CRNAs: Career dissatisfaction, substance abuse, early retirement.
- For Patients: Increased medical errors, poorer outcomes.
- For Hospitals: High turnover, financial losses.
- Visual: Infographic linking burnout to patient safety risks.

Impact of Burnout on Individuals

- Chronic work-related stress, a precursor to burnout, has been associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes for health workers, including:
 - Impaired cognitive function
 - Increased risk of heart disease
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Fertility issues
 - Sleep disruptions and insomnia
 - Family and relationship conflict
 - Isolation
 - Anxiety and depression
 - Increased risk for substance use and misuse

(Han et al, Ann Intern Med: 170(11):784-790, 2019), (Salvagioni et al, PloS one: 12(10):e0185781, 2017)



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Societal, cultural,
structural, and
organizational factors
that contribute to
burnout among
healthcare workers

Factors associated with burnout among health workers



(Addressing Health Worker Burnout: The
U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building
a Thriving Health Workforce, 2022)

What Steps Can We Take?



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What Can I Do For Myself?

- Identify Values
 - Debunk myth of delayed gratification
 - What matters to you most?
 - Balance personal and professional lives
- Optimize Meaning in Work
 - Flow
 - Choose/limit type of practice
 - Environment
- Nurture Personal Wellness Activities
 - Relationships (connect w/ colleagues; personal)
 - Religious/spiritual practice
 - Personal interests/hobbies
 - Self-care (exercise, sleep, regular medical care)

10 Keys to Resilience: A Holistic Approach

- Optimism: belief in brighter future
- Facing fear: adaptive response
- Moral compass/ethics/altruism
- Religion and spirituality: drawing on faith
- Social support
- Resilient role models
- Training: physical fitness
- Brain fitness: challenge your mind and heart
- Cognitive and emotional flexibility
- Meaning, purpose, and growth

Overcoming Healthcare Burnout

- Reduce administrative and documentation burdens, increase practice efficiency
- Transform organizational cultures to prioritize healthcare worker wellness
- Strengthening social connection and community
- Invest in public health and our public health workforce
- Ensure that every health worker has access to affordable, confidential, and convenient mental health care
 - Offer evidence-based training and practices that support prevention, early intervention, and treatment of an array of conditions including burnout and mental health challenges
- Protecting healthcare workers from workplace violence must be prioritized



Burnout symptoms...



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Join at menti.com | use code 2367 3884

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DB



What, if any, burnout symptoms have you experienced in the past year

focus transpiration
creative
fast bold
inspiration
leader

Menti

New survey



Choose a slide to present

What, if any, burnout symptoms have you experienced in the past year



Strategies for Prevention and Resilience

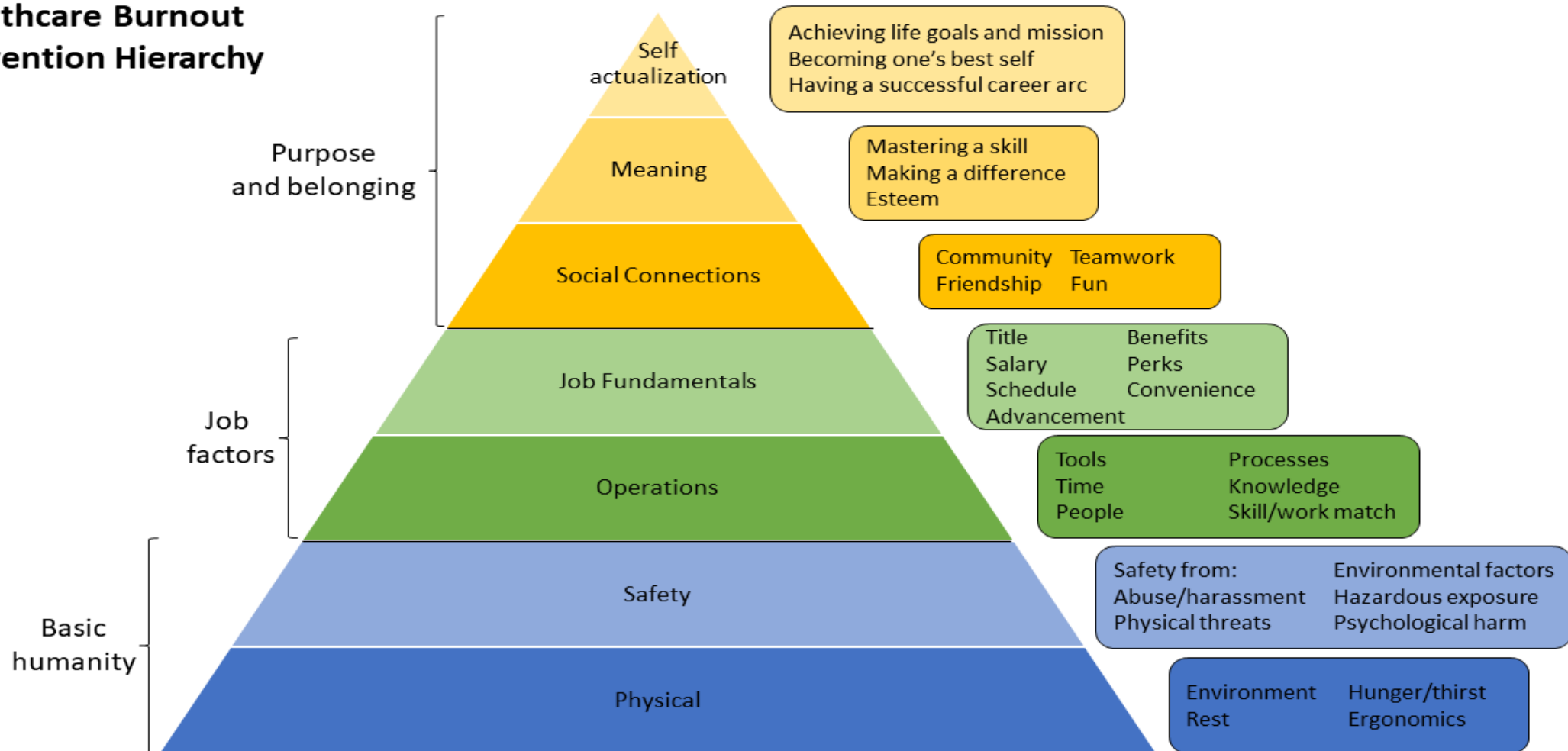
- Institutional Changes:
 - Better staffing ratios, wellness programs, mentorship.
- Personal Coping Mechanisms:
 - Mindfulness, exercise, peer support groups.
- Advocacy & Policy:
 - AANA wellness initiatives, lobbying for CRNA protections.

Pyramid of Prevention



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Healthcare Burnout Prevention Hierarchy



Redgoggles.blog

Prevention



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- Question: "What strategies have you seen work in your for you?"

Strategies to avoid BURNOUT and taking care of yourself



Practice SELF CARE

take time for yourself
get enough sleep
eat a healthy diet



Take BREAKS

rest and recharge daily
spend time in nature
regular short breaks



Manage WORKLOAD

organize your activities
break down large projects
realistic goals and deadlines



Identify SOURCES OF STRESS

reduce stress triggers
focus on solutions
challenge negative self-talk



Stay ORGANISED

write things down
declutter your space



Practice TIME MANAGEMENT

prioritize your tasks
create a schedule
productivity tools & techniques



Practice MINDFULNESS

focus on the present
gratitude and meditation
deep breathing exercises



Pursue HOBBIES

time for your passions
engage in activities you enjoy
learn new skills



Set BOUNDARIES

stay focused
learn to say "no"
unplug from technology



EXERCISE

physical activity everyday
go for a walk
yoga or stretching



Connect with OTHERS

time with friends and family
group activities
attend local events



Ask for HELP

talk to your manager or HR
seek professional help
social support

Creating a Culture of Wellness



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- Valuing ourselves
- Valuing our colleagues
- Valuing our personal relationships

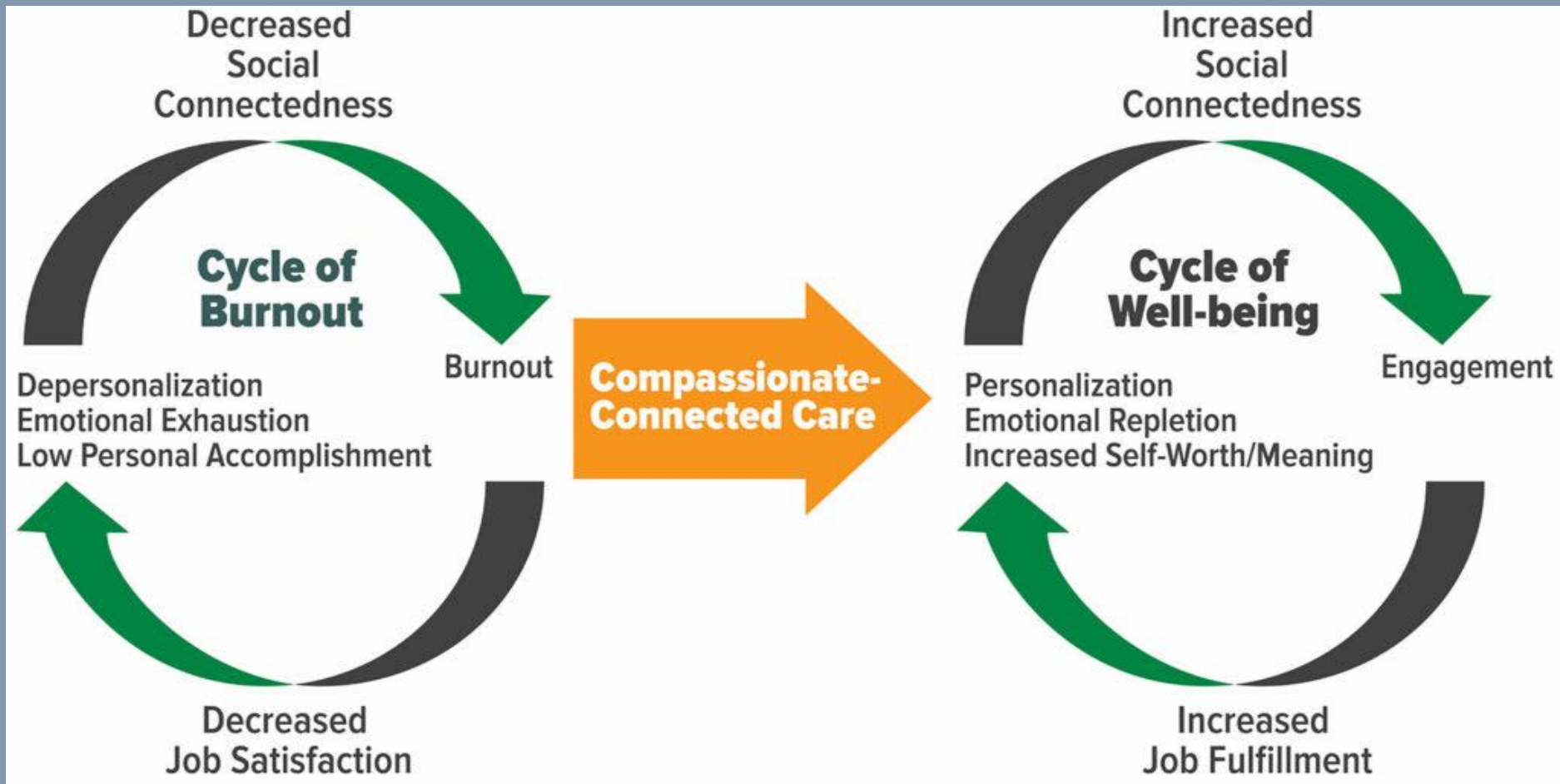
Wellness-Centered Leadership



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- Care
 - Recognize critical role leader behaviors play in the well-being of team member
 - Understand multi-faceted needs of individuals
- Cultivate Relationships
 - Develop relationships with individuals
 - Nurture interrelationship of the team (community)
- Cultivate a collective vision and shared sense of purpose
 - Inspire Change
 - Help team think beyond current state
 - Provide team members the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement
 - Build consensus regarding priorities for improvement
 - Empower team to drive change

(Shanafelt et al, Academic Medicine: 96(5):641-651, 2021)





- AANA Wellness Resources
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- Peer support networks

AANA Wellness Resources



<https://www.aana.com/membership/here-for-you/health-and-wellness/>

- Wellness
- AANA Helpline
- Adverse Medical Events/Critical Incidents
- Burnout and Compassion Fatigue
- Depression and Suicide
- Fitness for Duty Workplace Resources
- Managing Stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Sleep and Fatigue
- Resident Wellness
- Wellness in the Workplace
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- Where to Get Help
- AANA Wellness Ambassador Network
- Wellness Educational Resources

PANA Peer Assistance



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- <https://www.pana.org/page/PeerAssistance>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



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- <https://988lifeline.org/>

Conclusion



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- Key Takeaways: Burnout is preventable; systemic and personal changes are needed.
- Call to Action: Advocate for healthier work environments.

Take care of you!



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**“I make it a point
to practice self-care.
I make an appointment
with myself.”**

MANISHA SINGAL

MD, Internal medicine physician on
the frontline of the battle against Covid-19



the Healthy