

STRESS AND THE CARE OF MEDICAL BOARD STAFF

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AGENDA

Work Related Stress
Contributing Factors

How Does Stress Effect the Board Staff
How Does Stress Effect the Organization
Strategies That Strengthen Personal and
Organizational Resilience

This Afternoon, we will...

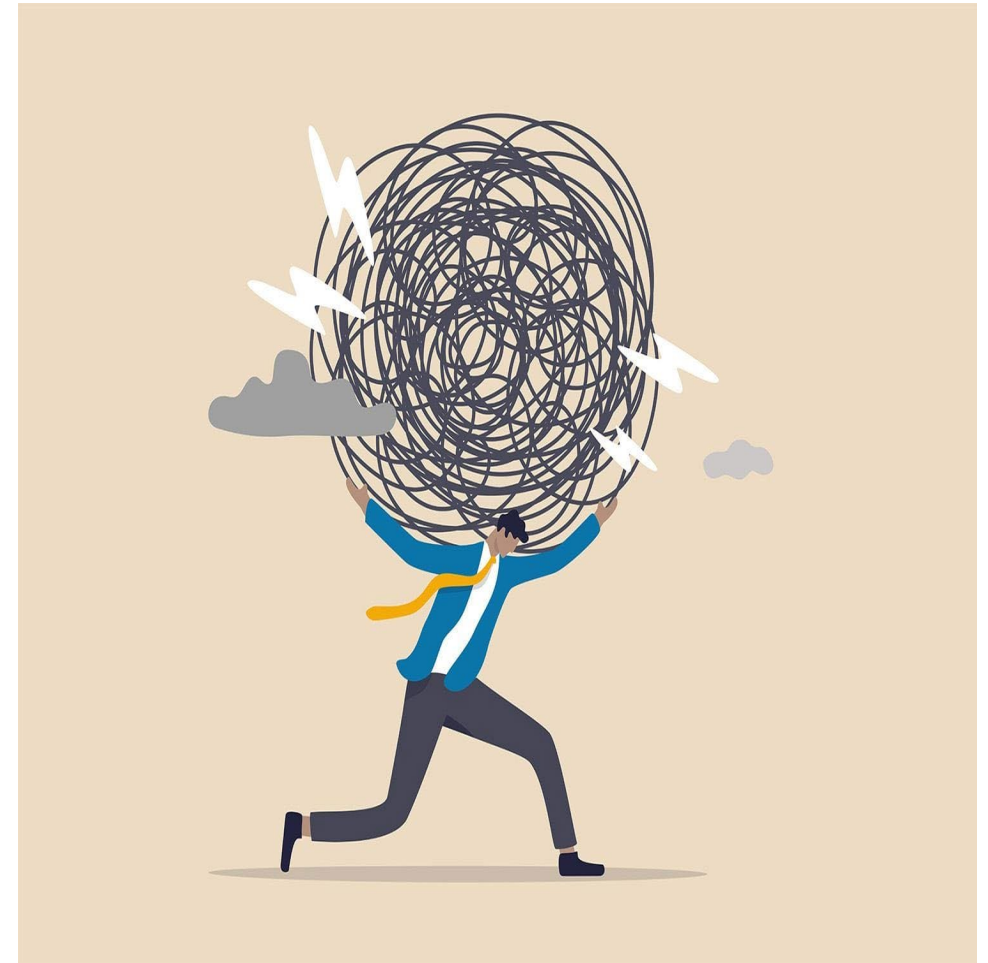
Define various forms of work-related stress

Explore contributing factors that lead to work-related stress

Discuss how work-related stress effects the medical board staff

Examine how work-related stress effects the organization

Identify coping strategies that the medical board staff can consider



Stress -

pressure exerted upon
an object that can either
strengthen or weaken it.
(Webster's Dictionary)





“It is not stress
that kills us, it is
our reaction to
it.”

Hans Selye

WORK-RELATED STRESS

Types and Terms

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Forms of Stress

- **Acute-** Acute stress is stress that lasts only for a short period of time. This includes situations such as taking an exam, starting a new job, giving a speech, or being faced with a work deadline. The body typically bounces back well from acute stress if the stress experienced is effectively managed by the person.
- **Chronic-** Chronic stress is stress that continues for a long period of time and does not go away. This can occur in circumstances such as ongoing financial difficulties, social isolation and loneliness, relationship problems, chronic health problems, caring for someone with complex needs, being overworked, being bullied, or living in an unsafe environment such as a war zone or where there is violence in the home.
- **Traumatic-** an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea.

Terms

- Trauma
- Vicarious Traumatization
- Secondary traumatic stress/Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout

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What Makes an Event Traumatic?

- It involves a threat—real or perceived—to one's physical or emotional well-being.
- It is overwhelming.
- It results in intense feelings of fear and lack of control.
- It leaves one feeling helpless.
- It changes the way a person understands the world, themselves, and others.

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000)



WORK-RELATED STRESS

Contributing Factors

Contributing Factors

- You continuously have to educate/justify the board's work
- You have to manage public perception
- When you see practitioners being exploited
- When the process fails to protect the public, i.e., probable cause isn't found, victims are retraumatized, final decisions don't "fit the crime"
- When you get the frustrated calls from complainants and/or respondents
- When other enforcement agencies are uncooperative, i.e., drag their feet or trump your investigation
- When you have to manage external pressures
- When you aren't getting the administrative/legislative support that you need



Contributing Factors

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- When others in your agency make your job more difficult by not doing theirs
- Not being able to confide in anyone about work related stress
- When drowning in paperwork and criticized for lack of timeliness
- When your staff are underpaid, overworked and feel unappreciated
- When coworkers are negative or there is constant turnover in your division
- You feel unsafe and unprotected
- When the public and/or legislature criticize your efforts and your accomplishments go unaffirmed



WORK-RELATED STRESS

Effect on the Medical Board Staff



Examples of Vicarious Traumatization: Personal

- Physical- Rapid pulse/breathing, headaches, impaired immune system, fatigue, aches
- Emotional- Feelings of powerlessness, numbness, anxiety, guilt, fear, anger, depletion, hypersensitivity, sadness, helplessness, severe emotional distress or physical reactions to reminders
- Behavioral- Irritability, sleep and appetite changes, isolate from friends and family, self destructive behavior, impatience, nightmares, hypervigilance, moody, easily startled or frightened
- Spiritual- Loss of purpose, loss of meaning, questioning goodness versus evil, disillusionment, questioning prior religious beliefs, pervasive hopelessness
- Cognitive- Diminished concentration, cynicism, pessimism, preoccupation with victims (witnesses), traumatic imagery, inattention, self doubt, racing thoughts, recurrent and unwanted distressing thoughts
- Relational- Withdrawn, decreased interest in intimacy or sex, isolation from friends or family, minimization of others' concerns, projection of anger or blame, intolerance, mistrust



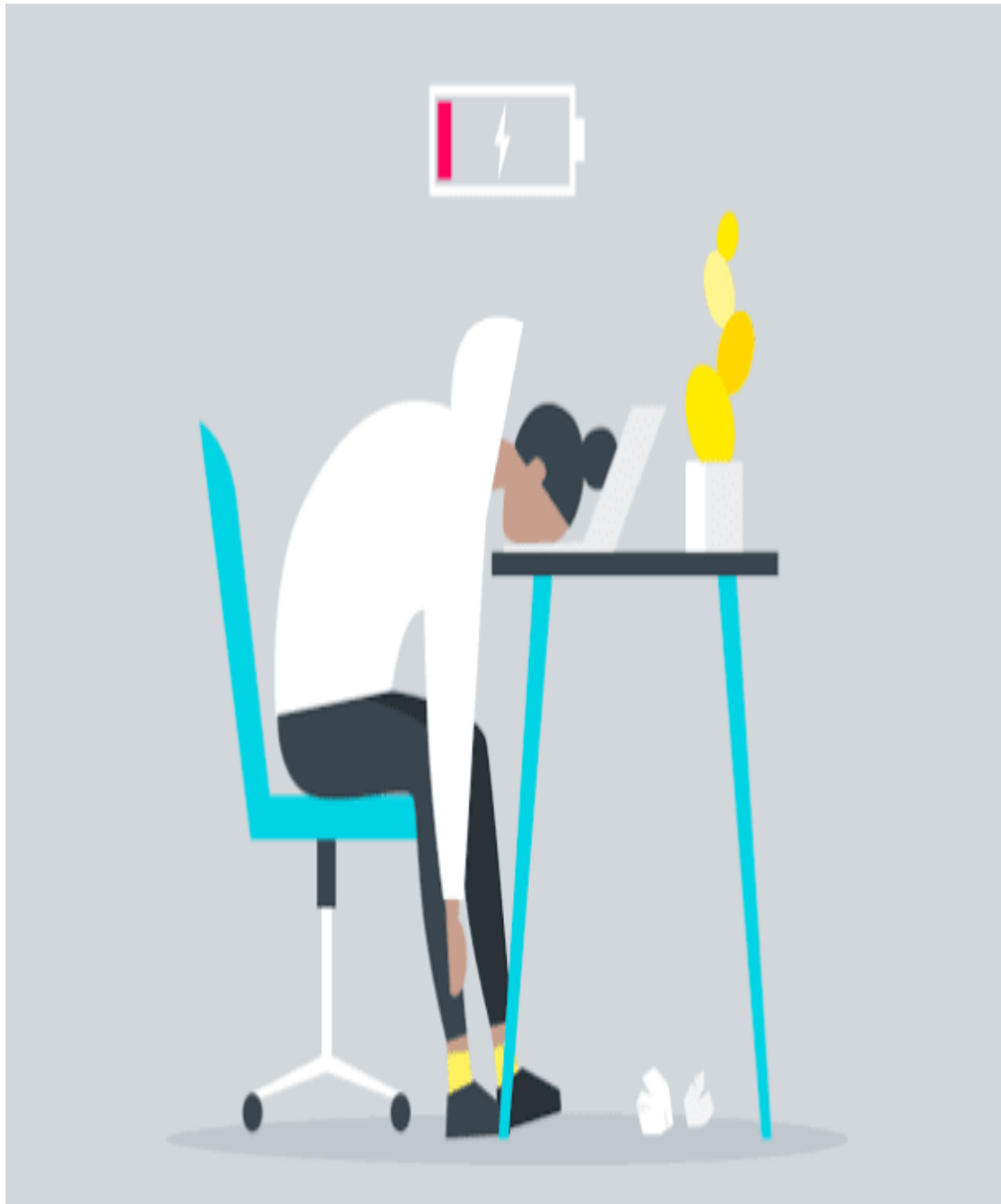
Examples of Vicarious Traumatization: Professional

- Performance- Decrease in quality/quantity of work, low motivation, task avoidance or obsession with detail, working too hard, setting perfectionist standards, difficulty with inattention, forgetfulness
- Morale- Decrease in confidence, decrease in interest, negative attitude, apathy, dissatisfaction, demoralization, feeling undervalued and unappreciated, disconnected, reduced compassion
- Relational- Detached/withdrawn from co-workers, poor communication, conflict, impatience, intolerance of others, sense of being the “only one who can do the job”
- Behavioral- Calling in-sick, arriving late, overwork, exhaustion, irresponsibility, poor follow-through

(Adapted from J. Yassen in Figley, 1995)

WORK-RELATED TRAUMA

Effect on the Organization



According to leading scientific research, employees who experience true workplace burnout have a:

- 57% increased risk of workplace absence greater than two weeks due to illness (Borritz et al., 2010)
- 180% increased risk of developing depressive disorders (Ahola et al., 2005)
- 84% increased risk of Type 2 diabetes (Melamed et al., 2006)
- 40% increased risk of hypertension

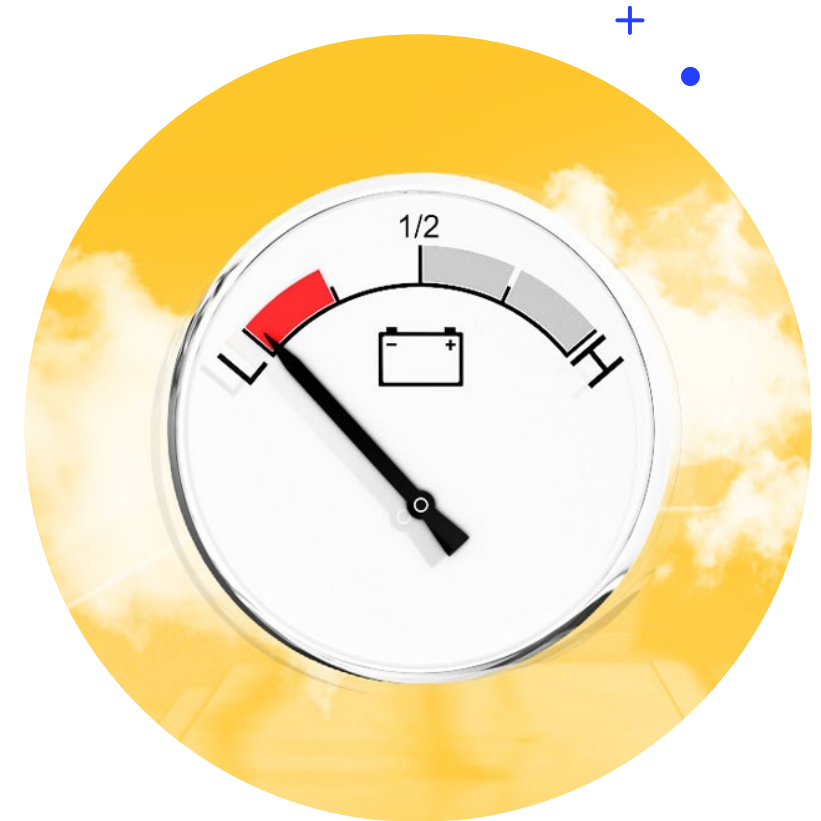
(von Känel et al., 2020)

Workplace Burnout

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Additionally, workplace burnout may impair short-term memory, attention, and other cognitive processes essential for daily work activities (Gavelin et al., 2022).

Dennis P. Stolle, JD, PhD, APA's senior director of applied psychology, points out that burnout has consequences for organizational effectiveness, not just individuals. "When workers are suffering from burnout, their productivity drops, and they may become less innovative and more likely to make errors. If this spreads throughout an organization, it can have a serious negative impact on productivity, service quality, and the bottom-line."



Why workplace burnout matters

Organizational

- Absenteeism
- Job dissatisfaction
- Presenteeism

Psychological

- Depression
- Insomnia
- Psychological distress

Physical

- Heart disease
- Headaches
- Musculoskeletal pain

(Salvagioni et al., 2017)

RESILIENCE

Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.

Several factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, including the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, the availability and quality of social resources, and specific coping strategies.

Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with resilience can be cultivated and practiced.

Fostering Organizational Resilience

Build your Connections

- Prioritize relationships
- Join affinity groups
- Build interagency connections

Prioritize Wellness

- Take Care of physical health
- Practice Mindfulness
- Avoid Negative Outlets

Find Purpose

- Help Others
- Be Proactive
- Move Toward Your Goals
- Look For Opportunities for Self-Discovery and expression

Fostering Organizational Resilience

Encourage Healthy Dialogue

- Keep Things in Perspective
- Accept/manage Change
- Maintain a Healthy Outlook
- Learn From Your Past

Seeking Help

- Seek out affinity groups
- Consult with colleagues
- Seek organizational assessment
- Develop strategic plans



Fostering Organizational Resilience •

Focus on the Organization's Basic Mission

- Revisit the ultimate goals of your agency
- Remind others of the importance of your work

Build a Culture of Inquiry

- Share new ideas with coworkers, subordinates and management
- Ask the right questions
- Be open to new solutions

Control Your Work Environment ○

- Creating a healthy workplace begins with each individual
- Establish positive engagement in the workplace
- Consistently communicate your purpose
- Remember that no one can control how you think, feel, or act



Final Thoughts

You have a vital role in the protection of the public. Within your role you see the best and worst practices of medicine and it takes its toll on the best of you. Without your thorough, unbiased and complete vetting and processing of applications and investigations, the systems that preserve and provide public safety would simply break down.

The stakes are high, but you are among an elite group representing only 70 medical boards in the states, district and territories of the USA that do this unique job.

Take care of yourselves and each other there are 322 million citizens that depend on you and on their behalf...Thank you.

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THANK YOU

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