WHAT’S IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT?
Resources and Tools to Help You Survive and Thrive
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What’s in Your First Aid Toolkit?

Our Mission

To ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.
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Behind the Mask
*Moral Distress and Compassionate Care*
PRESENTER DISCLOSURE

Presenter Disclosure
Faculty: Lara Traeger
I, Lara Traeger have no financial relationships or affiliations to disclose
Agenda

1. What is moral distress?
   Definition, causes, coping strategies, correlates

2. How can we address moral distress at the system level?
   Resources, metrics, research

3. How can we address moral distress at the individual and team levels?
   Coping with intense thoughts and emotions, engaging evidence-based interventions
Behind the mask: Consider the demands of delivering cancer care

- Interpersonal
- Cognitive
- Structural
- Administrative
- Emotional
- Societal
| WHAT IS MORAL DISTRESS? | Distress in response to situations that constrain you from acting in line with your moral values |
What causes us to experience moral distress?

**INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS**
- Perceived lack of efficacy or role expertise
- Incomplete understanding of situation, issue or clinical context

**CLINICAL SITUATIONS**
- Healthcare system gaps
- Inequities in distribution/use of limited resources
- Belief that treatment plan is not in patient’s best interest

**EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS**
- Conflicts between policies, priorities and patient care needs
- Pressures to reduce healthcare costs or litigation risks
- Gaps in collegial support or community culture
Coping with moral distress

Each case can cause a certain level of moral distress because I’m always reflecting on the choices I make and the steps I take. (surgeon)

If things do not turn out for the better, I contemplate what I could have done differently. (nurse)

[I shouldn’t] doubt whether to start chemotherapy. There are evidence-based guidelines… and, in the end, it’s the chemotherapy that does or doesn’t do its job. (internist)
Coping with moral distress

Focus on rational elements

What helps with moral distress is a well-structured formal debate with all parties. You ideally have enough time for everybody to formulate their rationale (surgeon).

What would help me are lectures about such subjects. (nurse)

Focus on experiential elements

[Our] debriefings… tend to focus on ‘how can we get things done better and more efficiently.’ It’s not that you can talk about how you feel and how a case affects you as a person. (resident)

Lievrouw et al, ONF, 43(4), 2016
Correlates of moral distress: implications for compassionate care

Moral distress

Psychological response to morally fraught situations

Burnout

Syndrome resulting from chronic occupation-related stress

Compassion fatigue

Tension, preoccupation with the trauma of one’s patients
HOW DO WE ADDRESS MORAL DISTRESS?

Multi-level approaches are needed to change workplace culture and reduce clinician stress.
SYSTEM LEVEL

Recommendations adapted from *Burnout and Moral Distress in Oncology Roundtable* (ASCO Ethics committee, 2019)
BROADEN RESOURCES

a) Integrate moral distress and wellbeing into curricula

b) Use existing activities/settings to promote discussion of moral issues

c) Develop resources for trainees
ESTABLISH **QUALITY METRICS**

a) Create guidelines or criteria for positive practice settings

b) Publish results of successful programs

c) Make programs more broadly available

d) Recognize best practices, highlight awardees
PROMOTE RESEARCH

Topics: risk factors, interventions, outcomes

a) Support and promote internal funding opportunities

b) Support grant proposal development
INDIVIDUAL/TEAM LEVEL
It’s not your fault…

Take this mindfulness class!…
THE STRESS RESPONSE

- Adrenalin
- Heart rate
- Blood pressure
- Breathing rate
- Muscle tension
- Memory/concentration difficulties
Signals of stress

- thoughts
- feelings
- behaviors

thinking of all the things that went wrong

keeping to myself

feeling worn out
Emotions and thoughts

What thoughts are related to these feelings?

“Everything went wrong”

“No one cares!”

“It’s their fault”

“I should have done more”

gilt

anger

blame
Widen your lens

Can I widen my viewpoint? Can I get ‘unstuck’ from these thoughts?
Individual and team interventions

- Education
- CBT
- Peer support
- Mindfulness
- Communication skills
- Health promotion
- Activism
- Self compassion
We must promote workplace cultures that support direct attention to issues of moral distress
THANK YOU
Sponsorship and Acknowledgement
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<th>Date and Time</th>
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<td>7/8/21 12 pm – 1 pm EST</td>
<td>There Is Nothing Wrong with Your Kit: It’s a System, Not a Self-Care Problem</td>
<td>Eucharia Borden, MSW, LCSW, OSW C&lt;br&gt;Senior Director, Health Equity and Clinical Services, Cancer Support Community</td>
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