



Podcast Transcript

Boundaries and Burnout: Strategies for Nurses to Maintain Self

The following transcript has been lightly edited for clarity. Elite Learning does not warrant the accuracy or totality of audio transcriptions provided by an independent contractor resulting from inaudible passages or transcription error. An occasional transcription error may occur.

Guest

Trish Hart, MBA

- Highly skilled stress management educator and facilitator of mind body workshops, lectures, trainings, and retreats and events on a wide range of wellness and mental health topics, to inspire individuals to thrive in performance both physically and emotionally.
- Worked in integrative mental health for many years supporting patients with a variety of mental health conditions including anxiety, depression, trauma, addiction, and grief.
- A regular lecturer at Harvard University and for several employee assistance program.

Host

Leana McGuire, BS, RN

- Extensive expertise with leadership development and executive coaching and a background in content development, visual performance, speaking and podcast hosting.

Reviewer

Michelle Doran, DNP, MS, RN

- Clinical and leadership experience spans primary, acute and rehabilitation care, school nursing, and the health plan industry.
- Career heavily rooted in community health and working with vulnerable populations.

Transcript

EPISODE 1

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

TRISH HART (GUEST): Our jobs alone are one of giving and that there's a collective suffering with humanity right now in terms of trauma, you know, really receiving secondary trauma from our patients and still trying to balance it all with our family and personal lives.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

LEANA DELLE MCGUIRE (HOST): Hello, everyone. My name is Leana McGuire and I will be your host for this Elite Learning podcast series, Boundaries and Burnout: Strategies for Nurses to Maintain Self, a course originally published by Elite Learning in video format. Throughout the two episodes provided in this course, we will hear from Trish Hart. She is a highly skilled stress management educator and facilitator of mind body workshops, lectures, training, retreats and events on a wide range of wellness and mental health topics. She inspires individuals to thrive in both physical and emotional performance. As you heard in the introduction, there is a lot going on in our personal and professional lives and finding balance is a challenge. Let's listen now as Trish provides more on this topic.

HART: My name is Trish Hart, and I am from the healthcare world from the age of 15 years old. I've been working in healthcare beginning as a candy striper all the way through the patient care side, landing from finance into Mind-Body Medicine.

I have a lot of education in this field, including some work with Duke Integrative Medicine, with mindfulness and do quite a bit of lecturing on these topics that really manage stress using the tools of Mind-Body Medicine, and also have an MBA from Boston University. And just really enjoy being here on the patient care side and all that we can do for ourselves.

Working with anxiety, depression, trauma, addiction, grief and burnout being kind of the resulting factor for many of these things. Let's get started. The goal is to discover the power of the relaxation response that each of us have and find different tools for understanding how all of the facets that are within us can really help alleviate our burnout.

And we catch ourselves knowing that when we're starting to head down that pathway, that we have some tools. Today, the objectives of this workshop are the following. Describing the contributors and risks of burnout, analyzing the impact of stress and burnout on our physical and emotional state, and adopting strategies for setting boundaries in our profession, and our personal lives.

And this becomes even more important, especially with nurses. You know, that we work with so much compassion for others and most often we find ourselves at a loss of compassion for ourselves and that we've been through quite a journey over this past 15 to six month period with, you know, working with COVID. But on top of that, just our jobs alone are one of giving and that there's a collective suffering with humanity right now in terms of trauma, you know, really receiving secondary trauma from our patients and still trying to balance it all with our family and personal lives.

So knowing that these objectives are great ones because it's even more important right now to our nursing profession, because there are 4 million nurses in the United States as of right now and one third of those nurses according to JAMA, they cite burnout as a reason for leaving the profession. And at this moment is when we need nurses and nurse leaders to be even stronger.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: A staggering statistic - 4 million nurses with a third leaving the profession due to burnout? Let's pause for a moment to reflect on that.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: Having a state of balance and wellbeing and the ability to care for others starts with the ability to care for ourselves. So really being mindful about how widespread burnout is and a little bit deeper in terms of that agenda going in and taking a peek at what are the causes of burnout and what are the dangers once nurses become burnt out there are some structural stages to burnout where we identify the symptoms and there's a whole amazing neurophysiology of how stress and burnout wreak havoc in our brains and our nervous systems.

So, from there, we're going to branch forward into discovering some healthy habits for recovery and how to prevent burnout and some valuable takeaways as well. So we have lots on the docket today. And as I mentioned, you know, burnout is a real phenomenon. And according to the World Health Organization, burnout is an occupational phenomenon. And it's not just for nursing there are many different causes of burnout and growing demand.

How, you know, we're really working with an increase in prevalence of disease and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics project that employment for nurses, registered nurses will grow 12% between 2018 and 2028. So, knowing that there's growing pains associated with this understaffed hospitals, overworked nurses and burnout, in addition to that, the shifts, the shifts are long and there is just so much ambiguity exactly what a shift would be.

So knowing that burnout is two and a half times more common in nurses that work ten to 13 hour shifts versus eight to nine shifts. Another cause of burnout is the obvious lack of sleep. And, you know, overall in the industry, there is a chronic lack of sleep and it's particularly noted with nurses that work long hours at consecutive shifts.

And in a study conducted by Cronus Inc, 25% nurses reported that they were unable to get enough sleep between their shifts. So, all of these things wreak havoc in terms of work quality. But it's the environment of what it is. It is what it is. You know, there's a lot of big decisions, life and death decisions, working with time constraints, lots of anxiety, calming others, a lot of giving here so the high stress of the profession alone has its challenges, but some specialties within it naturally are even more stressful, including working in the ER, or in ICU, or oncology nurses, where, you know, you're working so much with anticipatory grief and patients supporting families and not always knowing, you know, obviously what the outcomes for these patients are. Now, in addition to that, another factor causing nurse burnout is the emotional strain from patient care that's, you know, related to this. And knowing that we're nurses are in this profession for a reason, you're here to give, you're here to take care of people and make connections.

And you gain satisfaction when they when you help them feel better so but if you work in critical or end of life care, those emotional letdowns of dealing with lower recovery rates and higher mortality can lead to compassion fatigue, a secondary trauma. So, we also, as nurses that, you know, affect also receive trauma from that aspect so making sure that, you know, the risk of burnout is decreased as we move through these channels of giving care but no more than anything, what's important, too, is that we have support.

So a cause of nursing burnout is a lack of support, whether it's through physician funds or support team or administration, that if we don't have that support to do our jobs well in terms of regulating, you know, our sleep schedules, the length of our shifts and also our patient care ratios, we put ourselves more at risk for burnout so there are a lot of implications, kind of like a ripple effect of nursing burnout.

The first one is high turnover, you know, given a shortage of nurses right now. In a study by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health researchers found that there's a correlation between higher rates of burnout syndrome and nurses intention to leave so this high increase turnout then puts more stress on an already overworked environment. So that's critical that we note that there is a true implication on burnout and return to turnover and shortage, given we're working with you know, we need even more nurses at this particular point.

Now, lower quality of care, patient care is another dangerous risk associated with burnout. And as the quality-of-care decreases, you know, mistakes are made due to exhaustion, and that can lead to patient discomfort, infection and in some instances, even death. One study found that patients of nurses experiencing burnout had an increased incidence of urinary tract infections and surgical site infections.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Nurses are leaving the profession as Trish mentioned earlier. Now we're also hearing about the impact of burnout on patient outcomes.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: Increased mortality is another major danger of nursing burnout in a study by Marshall University, the nurse-to-patient ratios greater than one to four were not only correlated with higher percentages of burnout, but for each patient added to the ratio, there was a 7% increase in mortality, a 7% increase in mortality. Just by shifting that patient care ratio so how do we stay strong away from providing a bubble, insulating ourselves from burnout no boundaries.

Boundaries could not be any more important because boundaries, honor and respect our own needs and the needs of those around us. How burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome, emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job. Now we know that burnout is real and it's actually a costly industry. There was an estimate from 2018 that the physical and psychological problems of burned-out employees cost between two that I'm sorry, 125 billion to \$190 billion a year in health care spending.

So, boundaries can provide really strong lines to help prevent and alleviate burnout. And we've all been there. We all have that boss that might pop in you know when we least expect it. You know on vacation we answer the phone, we say yes to extra shifts and extra hours and the only one that suffers is us to begin with.

But then we see that there is a ripple effect in terms of the quality of care that we are providing to our patients. So just this year alone, you know, it's been overall an all industry. It's such a shift in terms of, you know, how many hours we're working, how much sitting we're doing, working with the technology of Zoom for those that are administration, especially knowing that working differently has certainly happened but in addition to that, you know, the boundaries have become blurred in terms of home life and work life.

Many of us find ourselves at home taking care of, you know, our children who are who are home during the COVID pandemic phase, older adults, et cetera, your parents, things like that, being sandwiched in and know that, you know, we always have stress in our world, but stress is a leading cause of 80 to 90% of visits to primary care physicians.

So just the shift with COVID on top of an already strained industry, profession has really, really affected causing that one third, one third percentage of overall nurses stating that they felt burnt out. So, know that, you know, burnout is something that we can feel and something that we can tangibly see in terms of our physical bodies. According to WebMD, the average person gained 8 pounds over the past six months.

In spite of the surge of on demand exercise content. So, stress management really became an issue, self-care, even though the content was out there, people didn't use it. So, if you think about burnout, you know, it's a reduction, it's a reduction of fuel or substance to nothing. So, if you think about a candle, we start so bright and if we were together, I would light a candle and say, this is what we look like.

Pre burnout. But over time that light becomes less and less bright. And you know that we truly do wither away so that we're not as effective. And that is the phenomenon that happens when we give and give and give and our inner resources are depleted, that there's no spark to light again, to start up again. So, when family life then collides with work life it's a persistent energy burn and that the path to refilling our supply, you know, to resilience isn't always clear.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Many nurses were definitely impacted by the pandemic. Now that we might be on the 'other side' of COVID, we're finding that many are suffering from its lingering effects, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Trish will now speak to the potential for addressing this outcome through the act of setting boundaries.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: So as we start to think about how do we do this, how do we create strong boundaries, we'll know that, you know, if we were in a room together, I'd ask, how many of you have a fence in your yard? Because fences can be fantastic physical boundaries about what's important to us you know, what's in our yard. And in the olden times, historical times, fences kept livestock in, and they marked property.

And if they weren't in place, can you just imagine so the far right, you know, depicts what happens if things are in place, you know, all chaos breaks loose. So, they also allow us privacy and that's meaningful and important. And that's really what burnout does. What is meaningful about burnout fences do what's meaningful and important to us stays in.

And what we don't want to have enter into our world stays out. It's something that's apparent in nature. We see it with cell membranes, we see it with crustaceans, Nautilus shells, that there's some firm boundaries about the environment and its implications on the inside organism. But, you know, in addition to this that, you know, the boundaries are really determined when we are very young.

It's something that's passed down through our parents and that some of us have these really loose fences or no fences or very strong fences. So, if you think about your personality, that kind of says a lot about how you keep your boundaries from letting everything collide. So, there's three personalities and basically you know, someone that doesn't have a door or a gate on their fence or very short a very short fence has what's known as a passive personality.

A people pleaser, a welcome mat. And more likely, those are the people that are to be burnt out. They're always saying yes, and that the worlds collide quite often between personal and work life. On the other hand, there's someone that's opening the gate and coming in and asking people to go beyond their boundaries, asking people to stay later, maybe, you know, extending a shift or again, about working with a patient care ratio.

Those are the people that are aggressive. So, they're the ones that are asking for those extra pushing the boundaries. But what we're trying to do is to find what is known as the assertive personality that we have. You know, what is meaningful and important to us stays in that we stand up for ourselves and that we have these boundaries in place that protect us and protect our energy.

And that's really what it comes down to is our energy. We only have so much to give and we want to give it in a meaningful way. So, as we start to move forward understanding, you know, when we have too much stress, we have an energy leak. And that energy leak leads us down the pathway to burnout so this is a great depiction that I can really sum up.

How we work with stress and stress is that very first piece. So, in this bell curve, you know, the axis, these are the performance and stress level. So, it's showing us that on the far left side of this bell curve is when we don't have any stress that we have. Basically, we don't have a purpose; we're purposeless that we are an active board, but as the stress starts to increase, our performance starts to increase till we get to the very center which is known as peak performance.

Everything is in balance. We're able to manage our stress. We have some meaningful work. We're feeling great our body is also reflective of this peak performance in all the systems of our body are what's been known as homeostasis. But what happens is as stress increases, we start to slide down that far right side. And what it's showing us is that you know, overall, the more the stress increases, the less we are able to deal with the stress reregulate so that we move into chronic stress.

And in this area of chronic stress is when we're overloaded, we start to become fatigued and exhausted. We might notice a breakdown in our mental health where anxiety and panic and anger begin to step in, and the end result is burnout and breakdown. So, this particular depiction was discovered back in nine are developed back in 1908. So, this is really been studied for quite some time.

And it's really interesting that, you know, everybody goes through a balancing act between stress and relaxation, freedom where we give our energy even area to Huffington, who is a very successful journalist and author and entrepreneur. She noticed that, you know, during the peak of her business that running The Huffington Post when she was she had so much work and put in very long hours that she kept pushing and pushing and pushing and eventually her energy got so low that she physically passed out with exhaustion.

And that was the ultimate burnout. A wake up call for her, that it was time for her to reevaluate her life and rekindle her flame. And we've all been there at different instances where we feel just like her. I can certainly say I did when I was in business school, giving, giving, giving, also managing. I had a chronically ill parent and a job as well, just managing many pieces.

And I felt like her at times for sure. So, with nursing, just even thinking about this past year, I'm sure you felt this way. Even in spite of COVID, the family obligations, all of it contributed to kind of falling down that right side of this bell curve.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: We just heard Trish reflect on Arianna Huffington's journey and relate it to her own. Take a moment to reflect on your past year - or two. Where do you feel you would currently fall on the bell curve of burnout?

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

What's interesting is what it does to us physically. The neurophysiological responses of burnout very similar to a fire similar to a trauma. So, the brains of people who are chronically burnt out show similar damage as people who have experienced trauma. And the burnout reduces the connectivity between different parts of your brain, which then can result in decreased creativity, decrease working memory and decreased problem solving.

So, it's really related to two areas of the brain. So, I know that the body runs hot during burnout, it runs hot with inflammation, and that the place in the brain that handles a stress response known as the amygdala flares up

when we are underneath stress and trauma, and it controls our emotional reactions. It's known as the reacting part of the brain.

It can cause moodiness. It can also cause you to have a stronger stress response when startled. Now, burnout also affects a different part of your brain known as the prefrontal cortex. It's the part of the brain that's responsible for cognitive functioning. It actually begins to thin the thinking part of the brain, and this naturally happens as we age.

But in people who are underneath prolonged stress for prolonged periods of time, it becomes more rapidly. It diminishes. So those parts of the brain that control our memory and attention spans are weakened. And this makes it difficult for us to learn. So, the brains of people who are chronically burnt out do so those same exact same exact damage as those people who have experienced trauma.

And this really reduces the connectivity between those different parts of the brain and that we are not totally dialed into our environment. We are reacting. So, think about even just to mention compassion fatigue versus, you know, burnout solves a secondary trauma that we are experiencing trauma of the brain and that we are obviously affecting our stress response and how we react to the stress around us when we are working with that amygdala.

We are in a state of what's known as fight or flight. And when we are working within that prefrontal cortex, realm, we are in a state which is known as the parasympathetic mode or rest in digest the relaxation response. And this is part of the work that Dr. Herbert Benson did at Massachusetts General Hospital. And he was a cardiologist and he studied stress in this effect on the brain and the nervous system and how much we have in control with our thoughts, with our actions and our self-care of where we want to send those signals into the brain.

So, with some of the suggestions, you know, what we do is we actually rewire the brain. We shrink down the amygdala and we expand the prefrontal cortex. And that is known as neuroplasticity. It's really important. So neuroplasticity can be attained through my body practices, getting out, nature walking, doing something else besides your job, even learning a new hobby but we'll talk about those things soon.

So burnout, it's a real thing. And again, we're just thinking about burnout like a candle that at the very beginning we are shining bright, we are lit. And over time, you know, there are stages as we move through that we move through burnout. And they're not linear, the stages are not linear that we might start to move between them, we might skip stages.

And this particular framework was developed by Herbert Freudenberger and he is is a New York psychoanalyst. So, in the seventies he did he created this model and he noticed the reason why is that his own job, which was just at one point so rewarding, had he come to find that he felt fatigued and frustrated. And he noticed that many of the physicians around him over time also turned into, you know, depressive cynics.

They may not have had a warm relationship with their patients the way they used to. They became cold and dismissive. So Freudenberger took these examples of health care in followed similar cases. In other professions, afflicted people suffered mood fluctuations disturbed sleep, difficulty concentrating, and also some physical ailments as well, including backaches and digestive disorders. So Freudenberger defined burnout as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional life.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Trish has shared a lot of information about how our brains are wired and rewired. In this episode we heard in-depth the ways in which nurses have been impacted by the pandemic. We also learned that

statistically one third of nurses are considering leaving their current jobs due to burnout. In Episode 2, Trish will offer some solutions to this burnout dilemma.

This is Leana McGuire for Elite Learning by Colibri Healthcare.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

EPISODE 2

TRISH HART (GUEST): There are some physical and mental symptoms of burnout, including fatigue, insomnia, and insomnia. I think it's such an interesting point because it's caused by that amygdala, that part of the brain that is scanning our environment to keep us safe, the reacting part of the brain. When that is alarmed, it creates a signaling down the vagus nerve.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

LEANA MCGUIRE (HOST):

Welcome to Episode 2 of our series on Boundaries and Burnout, a course originally published by Elite Learning in video format. In episode 1 we learned how nurses were impacted by the pandemic and staggering statistics on the exodus of nurses from the profession. We also learned the importance of maintaining a state of balance and wellbeing to combat the physical toll of burnout *and* to improve our ability to care for others.

In this episode we'll hear more from Trish Hart on the symptoms of burnout and strategies for coping as well as setting boundaries.

HART: it doesn't just happen overnight. It gradually develops over time. And these 12 steps, as I mentioned, don't necessarily follow one another in order. Sometimes we skip or often we find ourselves several times at the same step. And the length of each phase varies between patient and patient. So just take a moment right now as we move through these stages.

I'm just going to describe them broadly. So, I think about stage one. As you know, we just have gotten a job. So, I have a son who will be starting his very first software engineering job July 15th. So, his candle is so bright right now. So, he's going to give everything to his job, just like all of us. When we first began our very first days in our job that we there to prove ourselves going the extra mile.

We work harder and as we work harder, sometimes things fall away that we neglect our own needs. We might notice that we start to revise our values and we might notice that we have behavioral changes like withdrawal. We might not even acknowledge that there are problems in our behavior. We become depersonalized from our experience at work. We might feel empty which can also be affected by depression and thus leading us to burnout syndrome.

So, as I said, noticing if any of these things resonate with you because they're all pieces of this puzzle of burnout, and you might have noticed maybe a different experience six months ago, pre-COVID to where you are now, even just day to day, it can change. But where are you in these phases of burnout, if at all? You might be here just to learn more.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Do some of these actions resonate with you? Or have you observed them in one of your colleagues? Let's listen as Trish elaborates more on symptoms associated with burnout.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: There are symptoms that are attributed to burnout syndrome. As I mentioned that deep personalization of experience, the lack of interest or enthusiasm over your job, you might find yourself moving slower than normal. Disinterested in conversations, kind of pulling back socially, disengagement, your overall negative overall attitude becomes cynical or negative, and you might even start to really lose sight of what is acceptable professionally.

You might notice yourself more tardy, increased absence, absences just overall, not the same person that you were when that candle was shining bright at day one. Overall, there's a decline in productivity in the quality of your work is affected so it is high quality and you are tired. You are so tired because of the culmination of all of these things.

And that is what burnout syndrome is. There are some physical and mental symptoms of burnout, including fatigue, insomnia, and insomnia. I think it's such an interesting point because it's caused by that amygdala, that part of the brain that is scanning our environment to keep us safe, the reacting part of the brain. When that is alarmed, it creates a signaling down the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve is the largest nerve of your body and it connects into your adrenal glands in your adrenal glands is where epinephrine is produced and that epinephrine is like speed. So we might notice and stress increases. And as we move towards burnout, we can't sleep because our adrenal glands are dumping epinephrine into our bloodstream. So it's always important to note we might also notice mood changes.

Maybe we are more sad or angry or irritable. Basically, we become somebody else we try to calm ourselves medicinally with alcohol or substances and know that just with COVID alone, there has been a 300% increase in the use of drugs and alcohol. So medicating an increase in heart disease as a result of high blood pressure and other factors also more vulnerable to developing type two diabetes.

And overall a host of various illnesses. So, burnout isn't so great for our physical and mental wellbeing. That's obviously certain and some things put us at more risk for burnout. So some of these things might resonate with you, especially the first one. There's a pandemic and that you're trying to juggle many responsibilities. So, some of you, as I mentioned, might have children that were home that were unexpected.

Maybe you didn't have the space to accommodate them. Maybe there was more work associated with having them. Maybe some of you had to educate them personally. We had my 91 year old father living with us who had some chronic health issues in which I became the nurse and did all the IV lines and he had been hospitalized four times and had to have all of his services done at our home.

So that was quite challenging. We all have our stories and it doesn't just end with COVID, we all have our stories of all the things that we're trying to juggle. A second risk factor you identify so strong with your job. Your job is your identity and that you lack balance between your work life and your personal life. And I can certainly say that this was me at one point of my life, that I gave everything to my job and that when I was asked what I like to do for my own self care, I didn't have much because I was so married to my job.

Now, the way that we work has shifted. So, think about the time that we spend online. Medical records are now online. There's a lot to it working with the various systems of that coordinate patient care and medical records. In addition, some of us might find ourselves working on Zoom, and Zoom is interesting because there is a delay actually point the Zoom delay between what we see and what the brain processes.

So, there's always a catchup game between those two and it's exhausting. Now, the obvious one with nursing, you have a high workload, including overtime work. So that you're very you're not in control of your work at any

time, but now there's more of it you try to be everything to everyone. And this is the perfectionist striving. You want to be a great parents, great coworker, great leader, so many roles that each of you play is that there's an irregular distribution of the tasks and that you just can't catch up, that you want to be everything to everyone being in the helping profession.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Certainly how some of us work and communicate with each other has changed due to the pandemic. Many roles are now remote, which many of us couldn't have imagined just a few short years ago. COVID even changed how we communicate with our patients, bringing forth technologies that have allowed us to connect without fear of exposure. Nurses aren't the only ones struggling with being in a caring role, however. Let's listen as Trish elaborates.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: This just isn't for nurses. This could include childcare, transportation, I mean just different industries that you're supporting and helping people. So, you know, nursing is obviously one all about helping physically and emotionally but it's exhausting because you're always giving you have an energy leak constantly unless you put the cap on it, you're of little help to others.

And then you feel that you have little or no control over your work. That kind of sums up the job description to be a nurse, that you're always patient to patient, case to case, day to day, moment to moment, never knowing what's coming in the door. And what are the expectations and then some of us, our jobs are monotonous and this could be outside of the profession.

But if you're doing the same thing every day, you eventually grow weary of it. And then finally that you don't have a self-care routine, you don't have any hobbies, you don't take vacations you don't have breaks. And these breaks are really important, and the breaks can be mental ones, too. So think about this. This is a break that breaks the breaks fear.

If you find yourself going into the black hole of fear, this is a wonderful break for the brain you ask yourselves a question that you need to solve. So for example, how many quarters are in \$208 and what this does by you having to think about that response is dismantle and dysregulated and reregulate your nervous system. So it dysregulates, dismantles that fight or flight, and reregulate your nervous system by putting you back into the thinking mind.

So know that you know, there's just so much happening right now in nursing, but the factors are real and a couple other ones that just want to mention is that, you know, you might also be working with grief. You're working with grief for your patients, anticipatory anticipatory grief of possible losses. You might have had experienced grief. Maybe you lost someone, a loved one or relationship or structure.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: With over 1 million deaths in this country alone due to COVID, many of you are also dealing with grief, both on a professional as well as personal level. Many of you were surrogates for families who were not able to be with their loved ones as they passed. For being there - we thank you. But we also know it's taken a toll.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

Maybe your plans were disrupted for the future. Lots of things. Maybe values changed or the connection, lots of issues can cause burnout by not having the ability to stay steady. And then finally, discomfort, physical discomfort or relational conditions that are just not comfortable, the steadiness, the grounding, but also things like ergonomics. Maybe even just like your feet hurt from being on your feet all day long, maybe lifting patience your body is tired.

There's many different things that can affect us physically related to burnout.

So overall, how do we prevent and improve burnout? We've got some great models here that I really hope you enjoy, especially the first one I think is fantastic and know that these are things not that you have a discussion with your manager, but these are more things that you can do for yourself that are within your control. And some of them you might need some a little bit of sharing and perspective, but these things are great.

Kind of like assessment tools and the very first one is known as an energy audit. This is a great model that was developed by Dr. Rick Hansen, and I know it looks like maybe like his five-year-old child depicted it, but it is so wise and effective. There are two components of it. One is called the stress meter and the other is called the exhaustion funnel.

Now, that stress in beta, you know, just looking at the faces here, when everything is good, we are in our green brain or our responsive mode and it's when we're rested. So look at that smile. It's when we're not disturbed by stress. Oxytocin and natural opioids maintain this state in the heartbeats more slowly and regularly. Blood pressure is reduced, and we easily digest the nutrients of the food that we're eating.

So we have a big smile on her face. But as we become more busy we completely might notice a change in our face. We move from what's known as safe and social into possibly anger, withdrawal disconnection. And that's in this red brain mode. And that's the reactive mode that sucks up all of our resources that could have been used for healing and self-expression.

The red the red brain makes it difficult to self-soothe and for the body to repair and regenerate. And it's a place as Dr. Rick Hansen describes as chronic inner homelessness, that we don't feel settled and that we are maybe just not being as compassionate with ourselves, knowing that overall we need to pay attention, paying attention to the relationship of stress and how it affects us.

Now, the other side is really important. I really love this model because I feel like it could resonate with all of us. Think about it as we begin the journey of work. You can even think about it like the days of the week that when we start the week out on Monday, we have all of our chores in place.

We've gone grocery shopping, our laundry is done, life is good, we've cleaned our house, everything's together. But as the week progresses, the laundry adds up, the groceries become depleted that things aren't quite in order. So think about again, the colors of green and red and green is the very top one is really important. So when we first start, you know, when we are rested in our candle is shining bright, we are able to manage work, chores, rest and play.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: I like the sound of that - rest and play. When we are starting out, we can do it all - work, chores, rest and play.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

And why is play so important? Because play is a place that we discharge our stress. We discharge our stress and we move back down the stress and meter ladder to a safe and social mode. But what can happen is the more that we commit to work, the things drop out. So the first thing to drop out is we notice in the second band of this is that play drops out.

So we're only working, doing chores and resting then from there what happens is that we lose the rest. All we're doing is working and chores and then the laundry doesn't get done, the grocery shopping doesn't happen. Whatever other chores you have in your life become kind of fall to the side and that we only work. And if we only work and have no play and have no balance, we move into exhaustion.

So just for a moment here, take a look. Where are you? Where are you?

You just hold that thought are you still playing is your refrigerator full so as we start to move into some strategies for setting clear boundaries, some happens with languaging and a felt sense in the body. So those those physical fences, it's really a parent of the boundaries. But sometimes, you know, we can really hold hard boundaries with languaging and a felt sensation in the body.

So this is something, you know, I know you cannot see me, but this is something that you can do for yourself. It's like practice, work. And knowing that as we hold these strong boundaries, we feel better, we don't build up resentment so there are two things I want you to think about two words. The first word is "no".

And that little word, those two letters are so difficult for us to say. We're so pulled with how much we want to give to others and be compassionate for others that we forget to give to ourselves. So just holding your hand up with palm facing forward, let's just practice for a moment. I want you to bring into your mind something that you are really struggling with that, you know, somebody wants you to say "yes", but you should say "no", something that you really know, that it would be too much and then it would put you more at risk.

And that exhaustion funnel and once you have found that that in your mind, I want you to hold up that hand, bring to attention what it is and just say the word no, no, no. No and no some more. Just practicing that word no is really plays tricks with the body. It creates pathways of memory. And that - no.

Doesn't necessarily mean forever. It means no. I'm unavailable at this moment. But perhaps is another time it can be done. But on the other hand, think about the word "yes" saying "yes" to yourself. Saying "Yes, I need self-compassion because overall, you know, I'm working with something that there is suffering and that is really what self-compassion looks at, that there's a moment of suffering."

And with the career that we're in nursing, there's a lot of suffering here. And that I'm not alone. I am not alone. That many feel the same way I do in my profession. And then starting to give yourself this open heartedness of kindness, friendliness and warmth like you would someone that you care about by saying yes to yourself, yes, I need nurturing and I need self-care connected with that.

Yes. And with that, "no" are the words hard. Stop that. I have a hard stop that you put parameters around the time that you are engaged with others, and that hard stop could be the end of a workday. Let's just make up a time. 5:00. That's my hard stop and then I can shift into my own self-care. Now, some of the most difficult things to regulate that are part of our lives that can burn us out are our devices.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: Are you looking at your device right now, while listening? Let's hear what the pull of our devices actually does to us.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

I am not your device. You are my device. It depicts that every 30 seconds we pick up our phones we pick up our phones to check in and 2019. We picked up our phones 96 times a day. That's just crazy. And I know I'm you know, I'm guilty here and there, but some things that you can do so that you can actually keep the brain calm, we don't do well with multitasking.

So, things like shutting off your alarms, keeping your work email on a computer versus your phone, taking that phone and putting it somewhere else. Maybe just checking your phone or device at certain time every hour or day or certain times of the day. And airplane mode can be a real friend to us. So really being mindful, knowing that every time we check in with that device, it creates what's known as a stress response and moves us into fight or flight.

So, it's in your best interest to really put boundaries around technology next? You know, we're always trying to find equilibrium between tension and relaxation at work. So what can we do starting with creative time management? And maybe there's certain times that work better for you that you're more productive. You can have a conversation with those that you work with your managers, maybe how how you you know, what area of nursing you are in, maybe make a switch.

I know I have a niece who's a nurse practitioner. She switched from neonatology working in The NICU. You supporting a premature babies into working in pediatric orthopedics. The much easier modality to work in. Another thing is to really evaluate your options and what I mean by that is what tasks you are working on in your time. And when you do them again, that can be a conversation you can have with someone else or with yourself, just really noticing what in your day you're going to do.

Your workload and when you function best related again to the change of specialty of focus related to time management, but overall discussion and then prioritizing meetings, knowing tasks. So, knowing that there was a 13% increase in meetings during COVID 13%, ask yourself, is this a necessary meeting? Is this necessary because multitasking or overall, you know, like meetings doing too much.

It's not our friend. And what we're doing is creating this frenetic energy versus calm energy that we can support ourselves. And in addition to supporting ourselves, we can support our coworkers and we can support management. So really noticing when we are leaking our energy and when those around us are leaking our energy and what tools we can use so this is a great depiction because what we're trying to do is rewire our brains and relax.

The four legs of self care. Those four legs are nutrition, hydration, that's one leg sleep, exercise and social connection so when you are in a state of homeostasis and balanced and you're managing your stress, then everything is great. Your stool is holding up nice and strong but if you start moving down that energy funnel and you're not having a chance to to play, to connect with others or to get to the grocery store so that you can eat nutritionally, you know, very good food or hydrate that stools, then you get a little weak and it might actually tip over. How steady is my stool that prevents burnout, keeping those legs strong in addition to this, really being mindful that the body needs to move, it needs to move, it needs to rest, it needs to process stress. So there's a little exercise known as the jellyfish break.

It's really a simple one in which you just get up and move kind of organically in your body and you can sway your body. You can pretend that you are a jellyfish in an ocean, that you're just swayed by all that floats around you, you know, all the busyness around you and that you are unaffected. This model is from Doctor Chris Girma at Harvard.

It's a great one that we just take a moment we stand up or we can also do it seated, but we rerelease and remove stress from our body because it needs a place to go. It needs to be discharged.

MCGUIRE: Let's pause for just a moment and imagine yourself as that jellyfish in the ocean.

HART: Another way to relax and rewire is to learn something new, to engage the thinking part of the brain. This could be in new interest that create flow such maybe like gardening or cooking, walking, whatever it is that makes you happy.

It could be volunteering, et cetera. And then knowing that compassion is key to our happiness. And that compassion is really two pieces. There's yin compassion, which is all the things that we do to hold ourselves tenderly. It could be those mind body practices, yoga, meditation, et cetera. But it also relates to our strong boundaries, our protective factors, the yang side of it, holding, holding ourselves up, protecting ourselves, so yin and yang compassion are equally important.

And then finally, knowing that we can't always do this alone, that's really helpful to really be checking in with others and that we are more likely to actually do our tasks. Maybe it's something of health. Maybe it's saying I'm going to go walk at lunchtime or whenever I have a break. If you tell someone you're going to do it, you're more likely to do it.

You can even have a contest with someone in my teachings. In my classes and courses. I offer accountability challenges using a Google doc. That's what I do. People go in and they check because nobody likes not to have a gold star, and it feels really good to connect with others. So making sure that you are public about your goals is a great thing.

So summarizing up today's content. Know burnout is real. We all start, right? And through our giving, thinking that we're doing such a great job for others, we become depleted and our candle begins to burn out. So recognizing as early as you can in your professional career that you must absorb the idea that your physical and mental health are at least as important as climbing the ladder of success.

From a corporate perspective, you know, you can say yes, yes, yes to extra shifts, extra hours, more patients. But if it's if you are not managing it and balancing it with that self-care, with those strong boundaries, you might fall all the way down the ladder. But like Arianna Huffington recognized, that burnout can be a great way to wake up a turning point a change, a way to bring the life that you want, the balancing in with a career that is all about giving, remembering that you are in nursing again for a reason.

You're here to help others, but not make it. Making sure that on the way that you don't give, you know, all of your energy and that you have more control than you think you do. And there are many things that you can do within your control to reverse burnout and finally, as you move forward with compassion versus fear, because some of us have shame that we have to have boundaries, you might have fear for a moment, but know in the long run, the only people who get upset when you set those boundaries are those who have benefited from you having none so having those strong boundaries, the yin boundaries, the yang boundaries allow us to do our work of patient care better. So I hope that you enjoyed today's presentation knowing that, you know, the body is keeping score, always. Whether you can see what's happening in your neurophysiological responses or not, or feel them, just know that there's an inside job happening here. We need to pay attention. So just at the end here, I provided a survey for you to kind of assess where you're at.

And these this survey kind of as a scanning to see where you are with burnout. So take a moment. Does any of this resonate with you? And if it does, I know there are resources within management things you can do for yourself. There are ways, antidotes, to burnout.

The very first one being self-care and boundaries. We need even more accentuation on keeping our nurses safe, productive. And we want younger nurses. We want to attract people to this profession versus turning them away because of turnover and burnout.

I love doing this work, working with staff and organizations, and as I said, the work is very important. Nursing work is very important and this much we can do for ourselves. So thank you.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: In our series on Boundaries and Burnout: Strategies for Nurses to Maintain Self, we heard from Trish Hart, a highly skilled stress management educator and facilitator of mind body workshops, lectures, training, retreats and events. Trish speaks on a wide range of wellness and mental health topics, inspiring individuals to thrive in physical and emotional performance. We've heard about the signs and symptoms of burnout as well as some strategies to balance the stress in our busy lives. Trish recently returned to answer questions posed by nurses, beginning with this one as it relates to helping members of our teams:

There are nurses who won't admit that they're burned out. How can we address this as their manager?

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

HART: Well, communication is really important observation and anonymity is really important. So making sure that you give them the at least the content in terms of the stages of burnout, maybe the check in at the end and sharing it with everyone, not just them, so that they can at least be their eyes can be opened to the idea of burnout and also discussing it, how prevalent it is.

As I mentioned, out of 4 million nurses, one third have burnout so it's not uncommon and that you do your job better. And that's the big thing. You do your job better when you really attend to self-care. So as a manager, perhaps you can even have events that are circulating around alleviating burnout, putting our our groups less at risk of burnout by doing fun things, connecting as a as a group, things that are healthy and having open communication.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: That leads us to the next question. How can managers proactively protect their staff from burnout?

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

I mean, I really think that just the word burnout. Hearing it, that it is real sharing statistics, giving them the frameworks and that supporting like if someone comes to you and is mentioning that at their particular time, they're having a hard time juggling it all, working creatively with those employees to maybe develop a better model for working. Maybe it's a proportion. Patient care ratio proportion. Maybe maybe their feet hurt that day, you know, like working with what is realistic of what you can do as a manager within that department to help support that staff.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: One participant had an observation that perhaps managers could help their staff prevent burnout by being mindful of all they're asking of them.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

Absolutely. It's hard to say "no", you know, just going home and practicing that no is really, really freeing, powerful, powerful and that, you know, you want to do quality work. So even if you say "yes", if you overcommit, your work will suffer, your self-care will suffer and you will move towards those stages of burnout. If you continue to do so in chronic stress.

I love that, that the legs of the stool, you can also think about it like a wheel. You know, if, if things are turning, if one piece of it's deficient, it doesn't turn or the stool breaks. And so those components are in a little bit more detail about those sleep. So making sure that you have healthy sleep hygiene patterns, including maybe if you can sleeping between seven and 8 hours a day.

There's many factors behind good sleep also hydration, you know, if you can, you know, hydration is our friend and actually actually helps us with sleep as well. And if you can drink, let's say half of your body weight in ounces, that's what's recommended and making sure that you're not going too long without sustenance. So every three to 4 hours making sure that you're eating so food and hydration and then social connection, making sure that you're connecting with others, it keeps our brain healthy that we are part purposeful as we saw in that the human performance curve that we need to to be with others.

We need to connect, we need to be part of society and we are social beings. And then finally, that last piece is exercise. So making sure that we're walking, that we're getting outside, that we're creating a little bit of cardio as well as stretching, moving the body and, you know, everything related to exercise so that we stay healthy.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: And a final question for Trish: How do you respond to nurse's reactions that it is difficult to practice the strategies mentioned in this session?

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

Well, it's just like it it is hard to to practice these strategies. And you don't have to bite off everything in one day, you know, even if you can just practice that word. No, you know, it's it's a habit so it takes time for habits to stick. So if you can break the habits down into tiny pieces, it's more likely to be valuable I know that it's hard because we're so used to giving in this profession, we're so easy to give compassion to others.

But remembering that self-compassion, you only have so much energy. And that's that's what kind of keeps me grounded. Do I want to give my energy to this? Am I giving away my valuable energy? Because you if you start to come from a perspective of self-compassion, it can make it more easy. Absolutely. What are your mantras? The things that keep you connected.

SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC

MCGUIRE: It is important for us to continue to learn about self-care and the positive impact it has on us as professionals. We hope you have enjoyed listening to Trish Hart share her expertise on this topic and that you continue learning by checking out other self-care courses available at [Elite-Learning.com](https://www.elite-learning.com). Thank you for listening. This is Leana McGuire for Elite Learning by Colibri Healthcare.

[Back bumper/outro]