GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- At the end of this session, you should be able to list major stresses – especially as they relate to family and personal goals.
- Understand your stage of development (self-awareness).
- Understand the practice choices open to you and their implications – and that there is no paradigm of surgical practice.
- Create a framework to deal with stress.
SELF TEST

- Write down your major professional goal
- Write down your major personal goal
STRESS AND SURGICAL PRACTICE

  - Found stress a significant threat to surgeons
  - Coping strategies not effectively taught during training
  - Specific training interventions for stress in the military, aviation and professional sports
Suicide

“Have you had thoughts that for your patients and family you would be better off dead?”
PHYSICIAN SUICIDE

- Annually 30,000 suicides in United States – roughly 1 per 8,000 population

- Physician suicide 40% higher in male physicians than the general male population, and 130% higher in female physicians

- Unfortunately, residents/physicians are far more effective in carrying out suicide than the general population
Physician Suicide

Profile of the Vulnerable Resident

- Sense of inadequacy, failure to help patients, failure to live up to senior resident/attending expectations
- Making a mistake that causes a patient’s death – personal guilt
- Being single and having no children is linked to higher physician suicide rates
- Being alone in a new high stress environment with little support
PHYSICIAN SUICIDE
WHEN ARE YOU OBLIGATED TO ACT?

- Colleague
- Friend
- Spouse
- Self
PHYSICIAN SUICIDE

Diagnostic criteria:

- More than two weeks of sadness
- Psychomotor depression – cannot get out of bed or accomplish routine tasks of living
- Does not derive pleasure from any activity for two weeks
Burn-out

- Long-term exhaustion and diminished interest (depersonalization or cynicism) without symptoms of depression or substance abuse.
- Limited to work.
- TIME TO TAKE A BREAK.
IDENTIFYING STRESS OR DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS IN COLLEAGUES

- Alcohol on breath at anytime
- Change in work habits
- Change in appearance
- Change in demeanor
- Cries for help – new risky behaviors
GREY’S ANATOMY VIGNETTES

Embed here video clip from TV medical program showing stressful attending-resident interaction or the identification of a fellow impaired surgeon.
Drugs or Alcohol

- Have you been “out of control” with drugs or alcohol?
  - Red Flag (>14 drinks a week for men, >7 a week for women)
Screening for Depression

Over a period of 2 weeks, for more than half the time have you or a fellow resident:

- Had little interest or pleasure in doing things and/or
- Felt down, depressed or hopeless

If yes to either or both....
Since you did not know what you were getting into, your significant other certainly did not.

Independent vs. joint decision making

Divorce happens – to approximately 50% of you

Do you regard your significant other’s career as important as yours?

Joint careers – who gets the geographic choice?

What happens if your marriage is in trouble?
RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR CHILDREN

- Should I choose a “mommy/daddy track” first job?
- How do I deal with not attending soccer games and school plays?
- Should I bring my kids to hospital rounds/OR? Encourage a career in medicine?
- Maternity/paternity leave – what is the NYU policy? What are GME guidelines?
RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOURSELF

- What happens if my marriage is in trouble? My child is diagnosed with a learning issue?
- What happens if I decide I cannot stand my life as a surgical resident?
- What do I do if I cannot make ends meet financially?
Should income level factor into my surgical career direction?

What is my obligation to NYU surgery since I was picked from 800 applicants?

What constitutes job satisfaction?
RESIDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

- Program director
- Department Chairman
- Trusted member of surgical faculty
- Committee of GME has engaged a psychiatrist for all house staff
STRESS AND SURGICAL PRACTICE

- Stress coping strategies
  - Early recognition of risks
  - Stopping and standing back
  - Control of self: physical relaxation, self talk
  - Control of situation: reassessment, decision making, team communication and leadership
REVIEW OF PRINCIPLES

- Understand your professional responsibilities to your family – “going with the flow” will probably end up in divorce
- You must resolve the conflict between time with spouse/children and realities of schedule
- Allocate time in relation to your priorities – don’t let others do it for you
- Assume you will have more than one practice pattern during your career
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Understand that practice choices open to you are much larger than initially appreciated.
- There is no paradigm of surgical practice – adult development suggests that our career and personal objectives change over the years.
- Develop coping mechanism for transference of stress to co-workers.
- Develop coping mechanisms for transference of stress to family.
- Develop a framework of acknowledging and dissipating your own stress.
- Set personal goals and revisit them annually.
- **Surgeons seek help too late – usually after irreversible events have occurred**.
Be true to your own goals...

- Clarity regarding goals helps guide career decisions
- Know what you absolutely do need and what you can do without
GREY’S ANATOMY VIGNETTES

Embed here video clip from TV medical program of a stressful interaction with a family member.
SELF TEST

- Write down your major professional goal
- Write down your major personal goal
Framework for “running the marathon”

- Set goals and re-set them regularly
- Learn about practice options
- Ask for help early and often
- Be a good partner and parent
STRESS AND YOUR FAMILY

- You are vulnerable
- Your family is vulnerable
- Your marriage is vulnerable
- Getting help
- Never forget your real priorities