Burnout was already a well-documented issue in healthcare workers prior to the global pandemic, but after multiple surges of COVID-19 we are seeing unprecedented levels of burnout and compassion fatigue in healthcare, causing some professionals to dread their jobs or even think about quitting altogether. Increased workloads, staffing shortages, and emotional trauma are just a few of the factors that have led to an increase in job dissatisfaction among healthcare workers during the pandemic. Want to find joy in your job again while working in a helping profession? Check out these 5 practical tips!

**Get Back to Basics**

Food. Water. Sunlight. Sleep. Movement. Have you been treating your basic needs more like "nice-to-haves"? Physical and mental health are intrinsically linked, so neglecting these basics leaves us more vulnerable to problems like burnout and compassion fatigue, making it difficult to find joy in our day-to-day work. Consider pressing the reset button for your body and mind by creating some specific and realistic goals focused on your basic needs, and only focusing on one change at a time! For example:

- Spending at least 30 minutes outside in the sun daily. Consider meeting this goal by simply eating your lunch outside or going on a brisk walk during your lunch break or between meetings. An outdoor "walk and talk" meeting with a colleague could also be a good strategy to get in some steps!
- Bringing a refillable water bottle to work and setting a goal for the number of times you will drink and refill the water bottle per day.
- Going to bed 8 hours before you plan to wake up, even if you "still have so much to do." There are always more things to do, but trying to be productive with insufficient sleep will make your job even harder.

**Use Your Vacation and Sick Days**

Americans have been taking less and less time off for decades. Research shows that most people take about one week less vacation than they did 40 years ago. During the pandemic, healthcare workers may feel shame or guilt when considering taking time away. Many studies have demonstrated the health benefits of taking vacation, including decreased risk of heart disease and other illnesses, decreased depression and anxiety symptoms, and reduced stress. Going on a vacation, or simply taking time away from work at home (i.e., a "staycation"), improves productivity, as well as energy and focus within the workplace. When organizations and supervisors support employees taking vacation time, employee retention, employee loyalty to the organization, and job satisfaction all improve. This is a win-win situation!

**Compartmentalize Your Work and Home Lives**

If you are feeling burned out by your job or finding yourself dreading your workday, practice leaving work at work by creating better personal and professional boundaries. You can practice mental boundaries by stating "I am leaving my patients at work" to yourself before you leave for the day or having a box on your desk that you symbolically put all work-related thoughts and emotions into before heading home. You can also create contextual cues that encourage separation between your work and home lives, such as leaving all paperwork in your workspace at the hospital before you go home, taking off your work clothes as soon as you arrive home, or immediately doing something enjoyable when you get home (such as cooking a new recipe, lighting your favorite candle, and/or listening to music). For those who work from home, make sure that you have a separate workspace that is different from where you spend your leisure time.

**Reorient Yourself to Your "Why"**

Remember that for every why, there is a how. Healthcare workers have seen some dark times during the pandemic, and it can be easy to lose sight of the meaning behind the work that you do. Get into the practice of reminding yourself of your "why" Why did you want to work in healthcare in the first place? Why did you start this journey? Understanding the driving force behind what you do can facilitate meaning and fulfillment in your job. Similarly, remind yourself of your unique skills and the special ways in which you make a difference. Perhaps you are the one at work who is always able to make your team laugh when humor is most needed, or you can remain calm and collected under significant pressure. Appreciating yourself and your contributions will open the door to feeling more in your work.

**Know Your Values**

Why is it important to know your values? Because knowing your values is like having a North Star to guide you back in the right direction when you are caught in a storm. Having values means that adversity, disappointments, losses, and trauma do not take away from your life's greater meaning and purpose. The adversity you have experienced as a healthcare worker during the pandemic does not detract from your values of helping others or contributing to your community. It is difficult right now, but these values can ultimately help you to find meaning in your work and to see this pandemic through. It is critical to live a life consistent with your most deeply held values outside of work as well. For example, if family is one of your top values, think of just one concrete thing that you can do in the next day or even hour that reflects this value, such as Face-timing with grand-kids, playing hide and seek with your child, or enjoying a date night with your partner.