

Seeing Suffering – Gateway to Care and the Path to Healing

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Academic Primary Care Collaborative

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Disclosures

- 1 I have no competing interests connected with this presentation.
- 2 I discuss no commercial products or services.
- 3 I discuss no experimental or non-approved uses of treatments.

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Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will:

- 1 Describe multiple ways suffering manifests in patients' lives.
- 2 Outline the Comprehensive Clinical Model of Suffering (CCMS) as a tool for clinical teaching and patient care.
- 3 Describe the recognition of suffering as a step on pathway of care and the road to healing.

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Suffering is all around us

Suffering is a universal part of the illness experience.

Relieving suffering is a fundamental obligation of medicine.

Patients bring problems to physicians in a safe socially acceptable setting.

Suffering often masquerades as a medical complaint.

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What is Suffering?

Distress, injury, and loss lead to suffering when it threatens meaning in the patient's personal narrative.

Suffering arises when a person believes that they can **no longer be the person they have known themselves to be.**

Suffering involves every dimension of a patient's personhood: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual.

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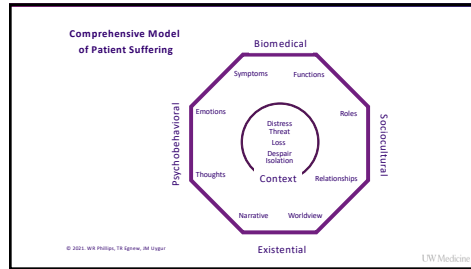
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Suffering - Caring – Healing

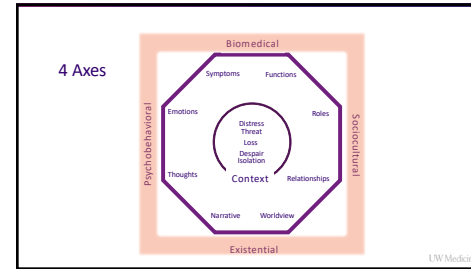
- Healing is a whole person process.
- Holistic healing can be defined as *the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering.*
- The path to healing begins with the recognition of suffering.

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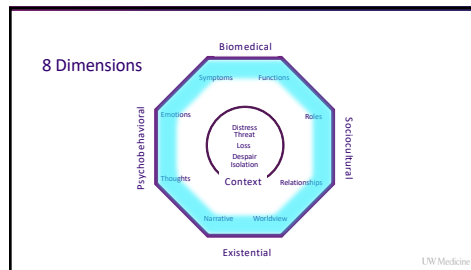
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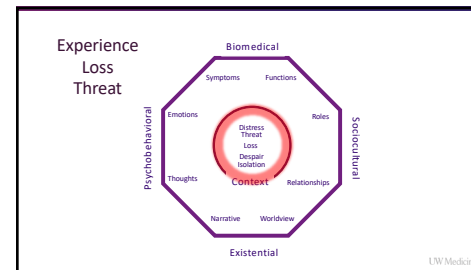
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Eight Domains of Suffering – Clinical Examples

Axis	Domain	Loss or Threat
Biomedical	Symptoms	Comfort pain, nausea, dizziness, insomnia
	Functions	Ability mobility, self care, sleep, control
	Roles	Performance worker, caregiver, provider, protector
Sociocultural	Relationships	Connection family, friend, colleague, lover
	Emotions	Emotional Distress fear, anger, sadness, loneliness, grief
Psychobehavioral	Thoughts	Psychological Distress anxiety, depression, loss, hopelessness
	Narrative	Wholeness Meaning Identity expectations, acceptance, future
Existential	Worldview	Spiritual Distress Value Conflicts Traditions conflicts in perceptions, values, fit, guilt

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The helping professions
The helping interview

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Marriages & Families

- Intergenerational
- Trauma
- Responsibilities

Suffering – Care - Healing

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Patient – Clinician Encounter

Patient	Clinician
Prioritize your concerns.	Orient to the patient and intentions for the visit.
Write down your key questions and worries.	Review patient list and questions.
Share your list at the outset.	Propose your priorities.
Negotiate a shared agenda for the visit.	Negotiate a shared agenda for the visit.
Ask questions. Check understanding.	Check understanding of assessment and plan.
Commit to a realistic plan.	Plan next steps and follow up.

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Comprehensive Clinical Model of Suffering

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Review of Suffering - ROS

Axis	Domain	Question
Biomedical	Symptoms	What causes you the most distress/frustration?
	Functions	What does X keep you from doing?
Sociocultural	Roles	How is X impacting you in your roles at home & work?
	Relationships	Is X impacting your marriage? Parenting? Friendships?
Psychobehavioural	Emotions	How does having X make you feel?
	Thoughts	What concerns you the most about X?
Existential	Narrative	How has X changed what you expect out of life?
	Worldview	Is X disrupting some of your beliefs?

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Appointment Schedule

38 yo F	Migraine.	meds not working
72 yo m	Memory problems?	Wife will come with patient
56 yo M	Low back pain.	workers' compensation
23 yo F	Vaginal bleeding	10 weeks pregnant
16 yo F	Swimming exam	history of Asthma
4 yo M	Ear infection?	Mom – speech delay?
64 yo F	Annual exam	no visit past 4 years
28 yo M	Cough	smoker
44 yo F	Menopause?	questions
52 yo M	Depression	back again?
14 mo F	Diaper rash	Dad bringing in baby
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Suffering as the modern epidemic

- Diseases of despair
 - depression
 - suicide
 - alcoholism
 - substance use disorders
 - loneliness
 - lifestyle disorders
 - violence

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Shared goals of identifying suffering

- Identify needs and address underlying problems.
- Process and relationship: Don't have to do it all at one visit.
- Pursue meaningful leads – not follow a generic protocol.
- Understand the patient and illness – not the organ and disease.
- Take first steps on the path to healing.

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CCMS experience

General Practice		Addiction	
Chaplaincy	Oncology		Pediatrics
	Social Work	Family Counselling	Palliative Care
Medical Education		End of Life	

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CCMS close to the heart of family medicine

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Patient - Centered Care

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Whole Person Care

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Goal-Oriented Care

ACHIEVING Your Personal Health GOALS
A Patient's Guide

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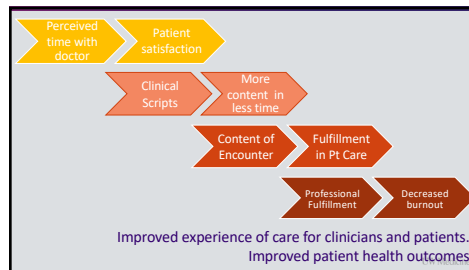
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Suffering in Context

Fulaingt
πάθος
معاناة
痛苦
पीड़ा
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Physician burnout

"The system would not allow me to be the family doctor I know I can be for my patients."

- Moral distress
- "Resilience"
- System reform
- Patient partnership

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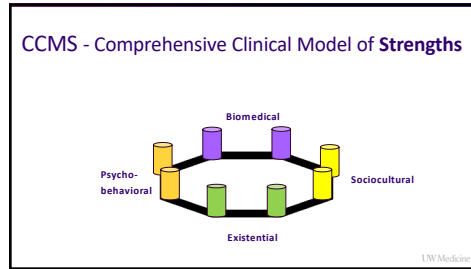
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Suffering – Caring - Healing

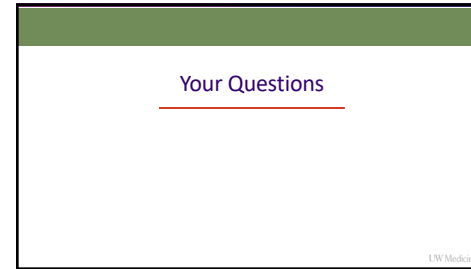
"I see healing in my patients and sometimes I have the privilege of contributing to the healing process."
- Family Doctor

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A Comprehensive Clinical Model of Suffering

William R. Phillips, Jane M. Uygur and Thomas R. Egnew
The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine April 2023, 36(2):344-355; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2022.220308R1>

Phillips WR, Uygur JM, Egnew TR. A Comprehensive Clinical Model of Suffering. *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*. 2023, 36(2):344-355. DOI:10.3122/jabfm.2022.220308R1
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Image Credits

Sorrowing Old Man ("At Eternity's Gate"). Vincent Van Gogh, 1890.

Migrant Mother. (Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California)

Dorothea Lange, 1936. U.S. Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information. Prints & Photographs Division.

"Doctor-patient partnership." Regina Holloway.

"Vitruvian Woman." Leo Soloway.

"The Sick Child." Edward Munch, 1925

"The Doctor." Luke Fildes, 1891.

"Despair." Edward Munch, 1894.

"Guernica." Pablo Picasso, 1937. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain.

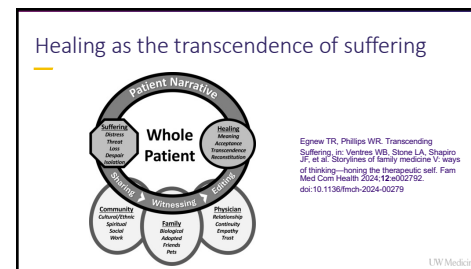
Sunrise. NASA.

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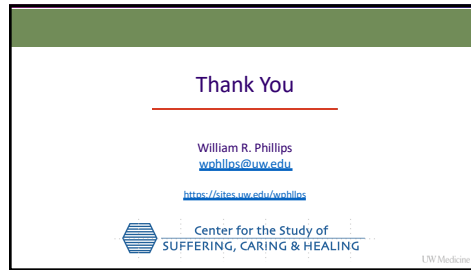
"Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." Paul Robeson. The Complete Recordings. 2018 Universal Digital Enterprises.

"Here Comes the Sun." Abbey Road. 1969. Universal Music Group.

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