

Self-care of physicians caring for patients
at the end of life: Being connected... a key
to my survival.

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March 18, 2009

Self-care of Physicians Caring for Patients at the End of Life "Being Connected . . . A Key to My Survival"

Michael K. Kearney, MD; Radhule B. Weinger, MD, PhD; Mary L. S. Vachon, RN, PhD; et al

JAMA. 2009;301(11):1155-1164. doi:10.1001/jama.2009.352

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Abstract

Physicians providing end-of-life care are subject to a variety of stresses that may lead to burnout and compassion fatigue at both individual and team levels. Through the story of an oncologist, we discuss the prodromal symptoms and signs leading to burnout and compassion fatigue and present the evidence for prevention. We define and discuss factors that contribute to burnout and compassion fatigue and consider factors that may mitigate burnout. We explore the practice of empathy and discuss an approach for physicians to maximize wellness through self-awareness in the setting of caring for patients with end

wellness through self-awareness in the setting of caring for patients with end-stage illness. Finally, we discuss some practical applications of self-care in the workplace.

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