

ELC 2020

October 16–18 • Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Pre-Conference Presentation

Date/Time: Thursday, October 15, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Title: Fighting Burnout: It's Not All Up to You

Presenter: Anne Mejia-Downs PT, MPH, PhD

Session Description: Physical therapist educators, researchers, and clinicians are increasingly asked to improve productivity while meeting challenging requirements of the educational and health care systems. Burnout has become “a crisis”¹ as healthcare educators and providers cope with multiple sources of stress. The characteristics of burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. In addition, episodes of compassion fatigue—taking on the emotional burden of others—may decrease the practice of self-care and positive health practices by physical therapists.

Burnout and compassion fatigue are caused by individual factors, but they can also be caused by a “systems issue.”² For example, burnout can occur throughout organizations when leadership decisions are not transparent or when communication is not encouraged. Almost all resilience efforts are directed toward individuals. However, it is equally, if not more important, to address systemic or institutional causes.

During this session, attendees will discover the causes and consequences of burnout and compassion fatigue at the individual level and the organizational level. Strategies to build resilience to counter these effects at the individual and organizational levels will be discussed.

1. Jha AK, et al. A Crisis in Health Care: A Call to Action on Physician Burnout. *Massachusetts Medical Society*. 2018.
2. Perlo J, et al. *IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work*. IHI White Paper. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2017. (Available at ihi.org)

Learning Objectives:

The attendees of this presentation will:

1. Identify the causes and consequences of burnout and compassion fatigue on an individual level
2. Compare and contrast this with the sources and effects of burnout at the organizational level
3. Explain strategies for enhancing resilience at the individual and organizational levels to counter the negative effects of burnout and stress

Speaker Bio: Anne Mejia-Downs is a physical therapist, educator, and consultant. She is an Associate Professor at the College of Saint Mary in the Division of Health Professions. She has been a physical therapist faculty member for 30 years, recently as an Associate Professor in the Krannert School of

Physical Therapy at the University of Indianapolis for 14 years. She has taught courses in cardiovascular and pulmonary physical therapy, pathology, health promotion, service learning, and public health. Dr. Mejia-Downs received a BS in PT from the University of Colorado, a master's in public health in Health Behavior from the University of North Carolina, and a PhD in Health Promotion and Wellness from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions. She has published multiple peer-reviewed manuscripts, chapters in cardiopulmonary PT texts, and delivered numerous national presentations. Her areas of scholarship include cardiovascular and pulmonary conditions, service learning, and health promotion.