WELCOME

Please take a few minutes to complete the Hot Buttons Questionnaire located in your red folder.

Disclosures

- Mary E. Maloney, MD, FAAD
  - No relationships relevant to this presentation.
- Bethanee J. Schlosser, MD, PhD, FAAD
  - No relationships relevant to this presentation.

Recognize These Hot Buttons?

- You’re running late and the car in front of you is going 20 MPH under the speed limit
- In the “Quiet Car” of the train someone is having a loud conversation on their phone
- Your teenager, AGAIN!!, returns home an hour past curfew. When you confront her she rolls her eyes and says, “Whatever”
- The night before his semester geography project is due, your 4th grader tells you he “forgot about it until now” and says he needs your help.

Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Mary K. Mann
Mary's Very Bad Day

Hot Buttons: Managing Ourselves

- Goals for this session
  - Introduction to the self awareness that helps us recognize our hot buttons
  - Understand the brain's workings that lead to our reactions
  - Identify methods to interrupt the process
  - Understand how this is vital to our reputations, building resilience, preventing burn out

Hot Buttons

- Recognizing What Sets You Off
- Managing Your Triggers

Exercise #1
What Pushes Your Hot Buttons?

- Mentoring Pairs
- Group Debrief

Self-Awareness

- A core leadership competency
  - Key to understand how we come across to people
- Lack of self-awareness
  - Can be a fatal flaw; leading one to make the same mistakes over and over
- Building self-awareness
  - Sessions like these to see self in a new way
  - Feedback from others

Burnout

- Hot Button stimulation makes your day BAD
  - Awareness of Hot Buttons helps you build resilience
- When bad days outweigh good days
  - We lose compassion
  - We lose enjoyment
  - We depersonalize
  - We become burned out
- Burnout is 1) exhaustion, 2) cynicism, detachment, 3) ineffectiveness, lack of accomplishment
Consequences of Physician Burnout

Resilience/Prosilience

- Awareness of Hot Buttons helps you build resilience
  - Resilience – an ability to work through, bounce back from challenges, stressors
  - Effort $\rightarrow$ recovery $\rightarrow$ more effort

- Prosilience
  - Proactive version of resilience
  - Building a bank of reserve
  - Training yourself for future challenges

Choose to Diffuse!

- It's not about the other guy!

- Can I change my behavior?
  - The only thing you can really control is how you react to the things out of your control

- What’s at stake if I don’t?

What happens to take us from CALM to CRAZED?

Just to remind you…

It’s not about the other guy!
Hard-Wired to React to Threats

- Threats can be real, perceived, actual, existential
- Anticipated threats induce same reactions as real threats

Threats and Survival

The Fight or Flight Reflex

- Necessary for survival
- Reflex reaction to threats: survival, safety, well-being
- Identified and remembered threats
- Amygdala has a long fear memory

Fight-Flight Neurophysiology

Physical Responses

- Accelerated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased, shallow respirations
- Increased muscle tone / tension
- Flushed face/ skin pallor, sweating
- Pupils dilate
- Decreased gut motility, dry mouth
- Increased focus – shut out distractions

And When Our Buttons Get Pushed
The Amygdala Hijack

The Amygdala Hijack

Fight – Flight physiologic reaction
- Blood shunted from neocortex to amygdala
- While everything else is revving up:
  - the prefrontal cortex gets disabled

Hot Buttons Trigger Bad Feelings = Perceived as Threats
- Stored emotions are part of our identity
- Experiences and interpretations are self-reinforcing
- Strong preference for negative experiences
- Fear memory is triggered by strong negative emotions
- Negative feeling about someone/something: a threat to our identity
- Threats to identity – threats to survival
- Repeated experiences – anticipate threats
  - Self-fulfilling prophecy

Prefrontal Cortex Shutdown
- Unable to think logically
- Impaired thinking and judgment
- Diminished ability to “read” others
  - Misinterpret; assume intent
- Decreased communication skills
  - Don’t hear what others are saying
  - Voice modulation and speech filtering disabled
- Act impulsively
  - Effects persist for 4-6 hours!! It ruins your whole day.

Another Reminder

Exercise #2: How do you feel when your buttons are pushed?
- Degree to which provocation of a Hot Button interferes with your physical and emotional well-being?

  - How frequently does a Hot Button provoke you into conflict?

  - Degree to which provocation of a Hot Button interferes with your job performance or an important relationship?

It’s not about the other guy!
Cooling Strategies: Choose to Diffuse

- Immediate
- Reflective

Immediate Cooling Strategies

- Label the emotion
- Activate your self-awareness in the moment
- Pause
- Breathe
- Distract yourself
- Detach yourself from the situation
- See the other person as being hijacked

Immediate Cooling Strategies: Label The Emotion

- Label the emotion if you can.
- “I am feeling frustrated. This feeling is natural, but it doesn’t serve me right now.”
- This will take practice.

Immediate Cooling Strategies: Active Self-awareness

- In the moment, address yourself 1st.
- If you can’t access this, you have missed your opportunity to soothe yourself.
- You can enlist others to help you.
- Those who know you well may recognize your early signs before you do

Immediate Cooling Strategies: Get a Helping Hand

- Identify someone who can help you.
  - A colleague
  - A friend
  - A spouse
- How can they intervene?
- You must be willing to make it safe for them.

Immediate Cooling Strategies: Pause

- Wait 90 Seconds
- With the pause, ask yourself
  - Is this person mean spirited or unaware?
  - Have I rushed to judgement?
  - Is this my pattern?
**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Breathe**

- **Smiling**: Activation of muscles used in smiling can elevate your mood – even when you’re not happy.
- **Hold a pencil/pen in your teeth for 30-60 seconds**

**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Smile**

- **Hold a pencil/pen in your teeth for 30-60 seconds**

**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Distract Yourself**

- **Ground yourself**
  - Stand
  - Pay attention to your feet
  - Feel contact with floor
- **Focus on physical aspect to distract from the emotional**
- **Make space, take a break**

**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Visualization**

- **Go to your happy place!!**
- **Visualize a place that is calming to you.**
- **Imagine a scene that will calm you.**

**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Detach Yourself**

- **Step back, gain some distance**
- **Imagine the scene as a play**
- **You are a member of the audience**
- **Detach from negative emotions, thoughts**
- **Let go of your investment in the scene**

**Immediate Cooling Strategies: Positive Self Talk**

- **Repeat an affirmation**
  - Most helpful when meaningful to you
  - Positive statement
    - “I can do this.” vs “Don’t panic.”
    - “I’m okay right now.” vs “Don’t be afraid.”
- **Make it your mantra**
  - Can be tailored to specific triggers, types
Immediate Cooling Strategies: Recognize When the Other Person is Hijacked

• It’s not about the other guy!
• We are each 100% responsible for our own emotions
• Seeing others as hijacked can decrease your own trigger response

Reflective Cooling Strategies

• Know your triggers and see them coming
• Cognitive restructuring
• Reappraisal
• Use logic
• Translate expectations into desires

Reflective Cooling Strategies: Know and Anticipate Your Triggers

- Emotional outburst
- Thoughtlessness
- Regret
- Yarn for “do over”

Reflective Cooling Strategies: Cognitive Restructuring - Reflection

- Why is this a Hot Button for me?
- What does the present remind you of?
- When have you felt this way in the past?
- What story have I told myself about the situation?

Reflective Cooling Strategies: Cognitive Restructuring - Reframing

- Negative → Positive
  - Relabel as positive challenge
- Problem → Hidden Opportunity
- BIG problem → small problem
- NO options → New options
Reflective Cooling Strategies: Keep Your Eye on the Prize

- What do I really want for myself and how do I want to be perceived?
- What is the best outcome that can be achieved at this moment?
- What lessons can I learn to be more productive?

Reflective Cooling Strategies: Use Logic

- What happened?
  - Focus on the facts
- Does my interpretation of this situation make sense?
- What would a reasonable, rational person do in response to this situation?

Things To Avoid

- Avoid extreme words and sentiments
  - Never (“You never put the milk away.”)
  - Always (“You always forget things.”)
  - Stupid (“This stupid printer…”)
- Avoid drama and exaggeration
- Avoid bad words
- “Yes, but…” vs “Yes, and…”

Exercise #3

- Recall a recent situation that triggered a Hot Button
- With a partner, discuss the cooling strategies you’ve used in the past
- Write down new cooling strategies you will commit to using the next time you are ‘in the moment’

Relationship Between Emotions and Behavior

Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

And it still is not about the other guy.
Final Reminder

It’s Still Not About The Other Guy!

Thank you for your participation!
Please complete the evaluation.