

Utilizing the Biopsychosocial Approach to Care for People and their Providers

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Epidemiologic data continue to reveal unexpected and concerning trends regarding the prevalence and impact of mental health disorders among physicians. Compared to the general population, physicians experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, death by suicide and substance use disorders. Physicians, however, are less likely to obtain treatment for mental health disorders. Barriers to seeking treatment include, fear of appearing weak, concerns regarding confidentiality or medical licensure, and limited time. Addressing these barriers requires systemic reform, and a reexamination of how the medical profession approaches whole-person care. The biopsychosocial model of caring for patients, is the cornerstone of patient-centered medicine and creates a framework for clinicians to support their patients to live their best quality of life. This framework recognizes the interconnected nature of the biological factors (i.e. medical diagnosis), psychological factors (i.e. mental health or stressors) and social factors (i.e. external pressures) that affect the healing of the patient. This presentation will highlight how I applied this framework to support Simone Biles, during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, when she sustained a highly publicized mental health crisis.