What can I do?

**Work-life boundaries**
Develop a habit that signals taking off your “doctor” identity for the day and focusing on your life.

**Cultivate supportive relationships**
A study of rural inner-city physicians showed that supportive relationships at home were the top factor in determining happiness at work.

Reflect on thought patterns that make the worst of situations
You may find yourself blaming others for thoughts that are negative, destructive, and increase your stress, instead of solving problems. When you recognize yourself doing this, try the “JIT” CBT approach of restructuring your thoughts and doing things more rationally.

Try mindfulness
Mindfulness is a practice of being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations at the present moment. It involves paying attention to the present moment, in a non-judgmental way, and letting go of past stressors and future worries.

Reorganize workflow to improve efficiency
Cheri’s team found success with various techniques, such as using sticky notes for in-visit documentation, doing labs and medication reviews before the visit, and focusing locally on improving communication with the patient. They also engaged in ongoing training, and using longer-term prescription renewal to avoid frequent refill requests.

Take a team approach to care
Recognize that everyone has something to offer the team, and you’re probably better at selecting tasks that don’t require physician-level attention.

What can we do as a team?

**System level changes we can make**

- **Prioritize burnout prevention**
  Establish programs and resources to help care providers stay well. One hospital made a “burnout coach” part of its team, offering telephone counseling and workshops.

- **Treat physician wellness as a quality measure**
  Burnout isn’t just an individual problem; it’s a serious quality concern, so physicians should have a responsibility to address it. Unhealthy and exhausted physicians are far more likely to make mistakes that can harm patients.

- **Accept nontraditional scheduling**
  Acknowledge that flexible scheduling or working less than full-time can be a strategic choice for balancing life and work, creating work-life balance, and improving wellness.

Adjust staffing to suit workflow
Interventions that improve efficiency and physician workflow, such as reducing and reassigning non-clinical work, may require more clinical support staff. A study of high-functioning clinics suggests that teams of 3-5 physicians per attending optimal team-based care.

**Sources**

**Note**
- The above references are for illustrative purposes only and do not represent the current literature or best practices in the field.