Study on human factors and team culture to improve pager fatigue

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Who is Daria?

Where
Russia->Portugal->Ireland

Education
Applied Mathematics/Computer Science/AI/Music

Work
Senior Software Engineer @ Microsoft Azure

Disclaimer
Not a doctor / all opinions are my own
Agenda

On call – why, where and how?
Happy teams – 7 common behaviors
Call for action!
(The dreadful) On call!

"On call scheduling, sometimes referred to as on-call shifts are processes used in business where employee work schedules are intentionally unpredictable. Employees who work on call are expected to be available at any time during their shift, usually with short notice, to carry out their working duties."

Source: Catchpoint 2018 SRE Report

A Look at Incident Response

- Incidents affect responders
  - 79% of survey respondents felt stress after incidents
  - 69% of respondents felt moderate or high stress
  - 52% said it affected mood
  - 48% said it affected concentration
  - 38% said it affected sleep
  - 38% said it affected their ability to be social

Source: Catchpoint 2018 SRE Report
You are not alone

...The median interval between pages across all specialties was 22:30 min... (source)

...firefighters showed high levels of physiological stress (…) when compared to normative healthy population... (source)

...46% of the officers had above average chronic fatigue score and nearly 40% reported feeling drained... (source)
“It’s work, there are nothing you can do, just deal with it...”
On call reflects our engineering culture!

Un unpopular opinion but *someone* needs to say it and I’m going to be that person today:

If the idea of being “on-call” sucks to you, it means you’re responding negatively to a *symptom*

The cause is more systemic and more a reflection of the team/org’s basic engineering prowess

Source: Cindy Sridharan
What makes happy team (and on call) – happy?
Let’s talk about 7 commonalities among happiest teams...
And it wasn’t low volume of pages and noisy alerts...
...It was a team culture!
“The Five Dysfunctions of a Team”,
Patrick Lencioni
Blameless culture: It’s ok to fail!

“…make them <your team> feel safe and secure so that they can take greater risks by building psychological safety—meaning that your team members feel like they can be themselves without fear of negative repercussions(…).”

“Software Engineering in Google” by T. Winters, T. Manshreck, H. Wright, published by O'Reilly Media
Technical literacy and hands-on experience.
“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”
George Bernard Shaw
Establish Accountability & Ownership

Accountability is the glue that ties commitment to the result

Bob Proctor
Build Feedback Loop
“Empathy is proactive perspective-taking and problem-solving.”

Andrea Goulet
And remember...
Each one of us is an agent of change!

Write Troubleshooting Guides!
Build feedback loops (survey? Interviews?)
Communicate! A lot!
Take ownership of a problem
Build horizontal workstreams – connect across teams

Practice empathy
Build trust – be consistent
Praise successes
Failing is a way of learning (fast)
Share your experience (Case Study, Brownbag, Demo)
Find a mentor
Become a mentor
Thank you!
All pictures (except my photo and book cover) are from unsplash.com
Twitter @DashaRV
And invest in yourself...  
...so you can change the world around you!