


The Psychiatry of Entrepreneurship: Mental Wellness as a Core Element of Innovation

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Abstract:

- Entrepreneurship and the venture startup process provides opportunities for innovation, growth, and new value creation. Intrinsic to the startup ecosystem, are characteristic cultural norms of behavior and psychosocial stressors which present mental health concerns for participants of entrepreneurial activities. This poster describes some key features of the psychiatry of entrepreneurship, including: the paradoxical nature of entrepreneurship in relation to mental health, the emerging knowledge landscape of the field and unmet needs, and the foundations for an ethical innovation framework that includes mental health as part of the startup effort, for both individuals and for their endeavors. Communities can be inspired by each other's talents and empathy, to innovate new mental wellness networks. The multi-disciplinary dialogue between entrepreneurship and psychiatry promotes mutual learning and exchange, and reveals the translational principle that the startup of ventures may share much in common with the startup of the self.
- Outputs Delivered: [Publication](#)¹, and  on [Twitter](#).
- Conflict of Interest: None
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Background:

- Entrepreneurship represents among the most complex of human mental activities. Entrepreneurs envision in their minds the possibility of a future state, and work to actualize their visions into reality.
- The economist Joseph Schumpeter contributed two fundamental ideas still true today: that innovation drives the growth of economies and of capital markets, and the person responsible for this innovation is the entrepreneur².
- Entrepreneurs are often viewed publicly as successful iconic figures, whose charisma and innovations transform and re-define the status-quo.
- Silicon Valley technology blogs have reported anecdotes describing entrepreneurs and mental health struggles during the often tumultuous process of starting a company.

The Entrepreneur - Mental Health Paradox:

- In their drive to create new value, entrepreneurs might paradoxically neglect their own mental health, despite their passionate mission of serving others.
- The source of the paradox might have roots in the culture of entrepreneurship, revealing unmet needs.
- Founders often face unique psychosocial stressors and environments where displays of strength and confidence are the norm, and perceptions of weakness are taboo.

Emerging PubMed Knowledge Landscape:

- Early work in the field focused on investigating characteristics of entrepreneurs to identify determinants of success or failure, and to identify which people actually become entrepreneurs.
- Increased likelihood of entrepreneurs and spouses of filling prescriptions for sedative / hypnotic medications vs. controls during the first 2 years of the startup³.
- Mental health problems were the second most frequently reported health problems for both male and female “small-scale enterprisers”⁴.
- Entrepreneurs use affect to gain information about how well or unwell their ventures are doing, which corresponds to levels of effort applied to their ventures⁵.
- “Well-being” as a new metric in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2013 Global Report⁶.

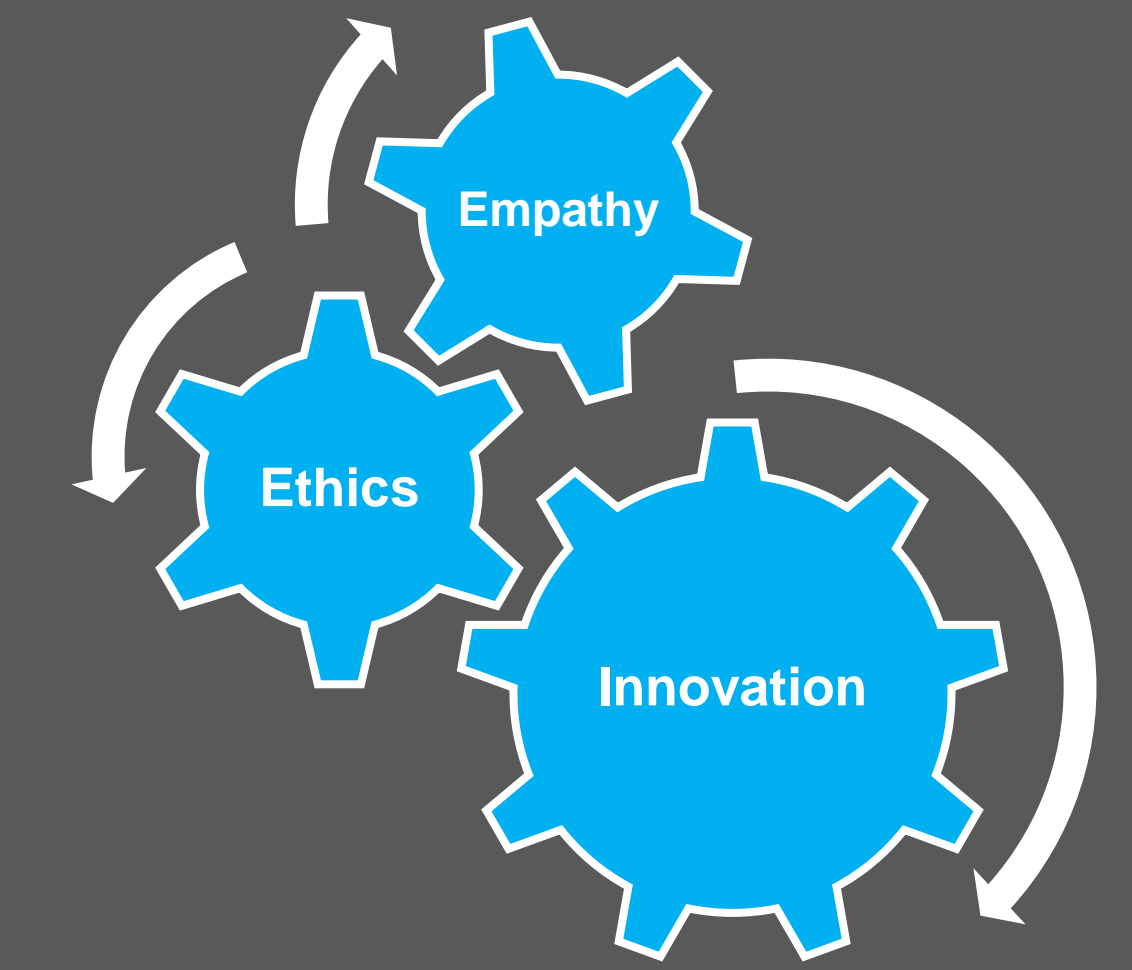
Potential Mental Health Concerns in Entrepreneurship:

Includes: Depression, Mania, Hypomania, Anxiety, Paranoia, Delusions, Personality Traits, Substance Use.

Psychiatry Supports Entrepreneurship:



Ethical Innovation Framework:



Key Implications:

- The psychiatry of entrepreneurship is a growing field, with currently unmet needs.
- Entrepreneurs might actually represent an “under-served” population, further reinforcing the fact that mental illness is a universal health concern.
- Psychiatry and mental health can be a key part of the “startup package”.
- Multi-disciplinary collaboration and new dialogues can help innovate new mental wellness networks.

Selected References:

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