



GME Wellness Subcommittee NewsByte

Balance... My Approach to Wellness

As wellness takes a forefront of importance within the realm of medicine today, everyone is pondering the concept or idea of “wellness” and so many questions arise. What does wellness look like? How can we ensure our medical professionals are maintaining a healthy, balanced life? What can be done to ensure we are meeting their needs and not allowing burnout to occur? The problem is, for some that might mean getting a few extra minutes of sleep or a great workout class, for others it might be a night out with friends or a speaker that really resonates and motivates. It might mean also a free night spent at home with their family or reading a good book/article that helps them clear their mind. Wellness is a complex and complicated topic that I believe can only be managed successfully with balance.

As I attempt to navigate through residency, I find that balance has been the key to maintaining “wellness” within my own life. In doing some personal reading, I came across a quote that stated my own thoughts nearly perfectly. As quoted from an article from Psychology Today, Amy Barnhorst (2018) states, “Wellness is not a yoga class, or a lunchtime speaker series, or a 30-minute survey put out by the hospital administration about wellness. It’s a state of mind where you give yourself permission to take care of your own needs first, and then get to everyone else’s. It involves letting go of perfectionism and ambition, and instead embracing periodic mediocrity. It means turning down committees, projects, lectures, and other professional opportunities (code for “extra work”) without feeling like a slacker. It means not sacrificing what brings you joy to get a top test score, an accelerated promotion or a fancier job title.” Wellness is not a one size fits all algorithm that when plugged in, meets everyone’s needs like so many want to believe. It is encouraging individuals to find balance and seeking opportunities to rest and relax.

So often, wellness activities end up as tasks added to “plates” that are already full or quickly sending out an article so we can check a box. Instead, wellness should be viewed through the lens of creating an open line of communication and establishing relationships with medical professionals/colleagues. It is understanding that we all need balance in our lives and examining the key components of wellness to ensure those around us have the tools necessary for a healthy balanced life. It is recognizing when others need a hand or a simple break. As stated from the National Wellness Institute, “Mindfully focusing on wellness in our lives builds resilience and enables us to thrive amidst life’s challenges.” (Nationalwellness.org, 2020). Providing time and allowing individuals opportunities to focus on their own well-being and those around them is crucial. Developing a work culture filled with comradery, compassion and choices that promote balance within our lives, will help to build strength and encouragement for a positive healthy life, where physicians are able thrive and flourish.

By: PGY-1 Resident Dr. Kevin Raymond, emergency medicine at Sarasota Memorial

Resources

Barnhorst, A. (2018). Physician Wellness Doesn't Mean More Yoga A different path to happiness, no leggings required. Psychology Today. [online] Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-crisis/201810/physician-wellness-doesnt-mean-more-yoga> [Accessed 22 Feb. 2020].

Nationalwellness.org. (2020). The Six Dimensions of Wellness - National Wellness Institute. [online] Available at: https://www.nationalwellness.org/page/Six_Dimensions [Accessed 22 Feb. 2020].