

Self-Care or Self-Sacrifice?

Medical school is an entirely new ballgame. We try to balance our time between multiple commitments which can result in giving up sleep, skipping lunch and even feeling guilty when we are not doing something directly related to our training. The demands of our busy schedules can often put personal wellbeing at the bottom of our priority list. But how can we provide optimal care to our patients and support to our colleagues if we do not first take care of ourselves? The answer is: we can't. Current evidence suggests that self-care suffers in medical school and greatly impacts our ability to learn (Bagby-Stone, 2021).

Take a moment to reflect on your own definition of wellness. What does it mean to you? To me, wellness means having a sense of balance in which I am present in each aspect of my life. Whether I am spending time with my family and friends, working on projects I am passionate about to improve the world around me or learning to provide optimal care to patients, I try to be fully present. Finding this balance and taking care of my physical health has become a natural part of my everyday life and has positively impacted me personally and professionally.

So, how are you going to take good care of yourself? I encourage you to...

- Take breaks; you cannot study all the time. When you do study, study in short intervals without distractions.
- Do one thing for yourself each day that makes you happy.
- Spend quality time with your support system - they often know you best.
- Engage in activities and hobbies that bring you joy.

References

Bagby-Stone S. (2021). Creating Space for Well-Being in Medical School and Beyond. *Missouri medicine*, 118(1), 50-54.

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