

Health and well-being for medical students – an exploration (30-minute lesson)

Lesson plan for facilitator:

- Learning objectives
- Activity 1
- The importance of well-being and patient safety
- Previous medical student experiences regarding maintaining a work-life balance
- Activity 2
- Strategies for managing physical, mental and social well-being
- Creating a SMART goal
- Activity 3
- Why and when should you raise any health and well-being concerns about yourself, peers or professionals?
- What should you do and not do if you have any health and well-being concerns about yourself, peers or professionals?
- Additional methods of help to improve wellbeing
- The importance of communication
- Learning objectives completion
- 3 key take home messages
- Actionable tips
- Five ways to well-being

The aim of this interactive teaching session is to explore health and well-being for medical students. Many medical students can find it difficult to lead active and healthy lives outside of the roles of doctor-to-be and student expected to pass stressful assessments and learn new skills. Also, many students are not always aware of what tools they can use to report their concerns about their own well-being and that of their peers.

The goal of this lesson to empower students with knowledge and tools to prioritise their health and well-being and be more conscious of that of their colleagues. Student will be encouraged to discuss and share their ideas about effective well-being strategies and will be introduced to SMART goals to use after the session to work on health and well-being goals of their own.

There will also key messages to emphasise throughout the lesson to emphasise the importance of health and well-being for professionalism and patient safety. The teaching points can hopefully help tackle the notion of 'doctors make the worst patients'.

Materials

- Facilitator's lesson plan
- PowerPoint Slides
- Students require note-taking ability

Introduction (20 seconds)

Description of what the teaching session is about: exploring health and well-being for medical students

Learning objectives (30 seconds):

By the end of this session, students should be able:

- To understand the importance of health and well-being for effective and safe patient care.
- To learn and apply strategies for improving one health and well-being based on public health guidance and productivity research.
- To learn what steps to take if there are any health and well-being concerns of self, peers and professionals based on the recommendations in the GMC and MSC's guidance: *Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students*

Activity 1 (2 minutes):

- Ask students: "what is your idea of health and wellbeing?"
- By using the website *Padlet* (<http://padlet.com/>) students should record their views and ideas – **give students 1 minute to do this**
- Once completed, the facilitator should read some of these ideas and briefly discuss them with the class - 1 minute

The importance of wellbeing and patient safety (2 minutes):

- Define health as 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. This definition was given by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Define well-being as 'the state of being healthy and happy' (Cambridge Dictionary)
- Students should appreciate that medicine is a challenging and stressful course and it is therefore normal that sometimes they can feel tired and overwhelmed.
- Students should understand that poor well-being and burnout caused by stress and work overload can be detrimental for patient safety. Studies have shown that poor wellbeing and moderate burnout are associated with reduced patient safety. (Healthcare Staff Wellbeing, Burnout, and Patient Safety: A Systematic Review - <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0159015#sec009>)
- Define patient safety as 'prevention of errors and adverse effects to patients associated with health care' – (WHO - <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/patient-safety>)
- Students should therefore understand that it is their duty to raise any concerns regarding their own well-being and the well-being of peers or colleagues.

Key message to get across: The GMC's guidance in 'Achieving good medical practice; guidance for medical students' highlights that a key part of '*true professionalism*' is being able to '*develop healthy ways to cope with stress and challenges (resilience)*'. p.7

Previous medical students' experiences regarding maintaining a work-life balance (90 seconds)

Make clear that stress is a normal part of being a full-time medical student and medical practitioners

Students are '*likely to experience situations that will have an emotional impact*' which is '*completely normal and your medical school will support you with safe ways to share and reflect on difficult experiences.* (32), p. 24

Key message to get across: However, it is the responsibility of medical students to manage their health and well-being to maintain a high level of professional practice.

Summarise the slide of common thoughts/feelings that medical students have and ask the audience if they can relate to these thoughts and how they feel (in order to identify the main concerns of the students)

Activity 2 (2.5 minutes)

Ask students to write down and ask 1 or 2 students to give examples of physical, mental and social wellbeing activities and ask students to discuss how these activities make them feel (e.g. feel in control, feel relaxed, feel less stress etc.)

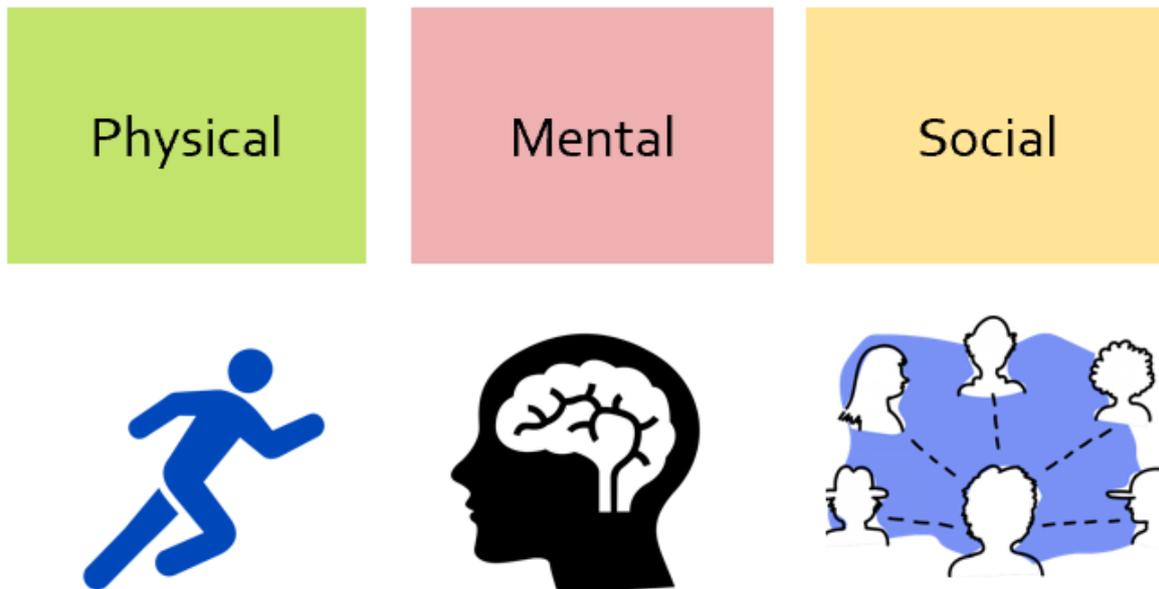


Image sources:

https://www.pinclipart.com/pindetail/hwJbbw_leisure-clipart-physical-activity-physical-activity-icon-transparent/

https://www.pinclipart.com/pindetail/hbiixR_emotional-clipart-mental-mental-health-brain-png-download/

https://www.pinclipart.com/pindetail/bRJbm_social-media-clipart-social-networking-social-png-transparent/

give students 1 minute to write down some examples

Strategies for managing physical wellbeing (75 seconds)

- 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week (Department for Health and Social Care, 2019)
- 2 strength training sessions per week (Department for Health and Social Care, 2019)
- Pick any activity of your choice that suits your interests and lifestyle
- Commit to eating a balanced diet to maintain high energy levels (complex carbohydrates, protein, unsaturated fats)

- Stick to a regular sleep routine as much as possible (e.g. 10 pm to 6 am) – can use sleep cycle application and phone's flight mode to turn of notifications and reduce screen time before falling asleep.

Go thorough list of activities for managing wellbeing and explain that developing a consistent routine would be beneficial in the long run.

Strategies for managing mental wellbeing (75 seconds)

Potential impacts of mental difficulties:

- Reduced concentration
- Social withdrawal
- Lack of confidence
- Poor nutrition

Prevention/Management:

- Meditation
- Reflection (often overlooked and under-appreciated)
- Regular breaks to avoid burnout and manage stress

Key message to get across: When you take care of your mental health and well-being you're capable of maintaining effective and safety patient care and achieving work satisfaction.

Strategies for managing social well-being (75 seconds)

- Community service (given examples e.g. charity run, teaching peers about learning disabilities etc.)
- Plan activities with friends and family in advance (give example: monthly hike with friends, plan a family holiday is year in advance to have something to look forward to etc.)
- Attend conferences and networking events (meet peers and professionals in a medical speciality of interest and open up new opportunities, opportunities to tap into any business ideas etc.)
- Join student societies (including non-medic ones) and meet new people

Example week - Jo, Second Year Medical Student (90 seconds)

Help students picture how they can organise their week to incorporate activities to improve or maintain physical, mental and social well-being

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am-12pm	Lectures	Lectures	Anatomy	Placement	Lectures	Hiking with friend from back home	Lie-in
12pm-3pm	Group study	Lectures	Lectures	Lunch with Paddy	Meditation	Review notes	Relax
3pm-5pm	Football	Coffee with Paula	Watch movie	Lecture	Conference	Cooking with flatmates	Relax
5pm-7pm	Meet with Ben	Group project	20-minute jog	Review notes	Conference	Phone call to Mum	Relax

Key message to get across: Planning ahead and reflecting on how to best use a schedule can help to prioritise health and well-being and live a balanced lifestyle. A calendar is good way to plan days in advance.

How to make an effective goal (5 minutes)

- SMART targets – outline and explain features of a SMART goal (90 seconds)



Image source: <https://www.fullfunctionrehab.com/smart-goals/>

- **Specific:** Well defined, clear, and unambiguous
- **Measurable:** With specific criteria that measure your progress towards the accomplishment of the goal
- **Achievable:** Attainable and not impossible to achieve
- **Realistic:** Within reach, realistic, and relevant to your life purpose
- **Timely:** With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date. The purpose is to create urgency.

- Give an example of an ineffective goal (explain why it is ineffective) and example of an effective goal (explain why it is effective) – 60 seconds
- **Activity 3:** Give audience 75 seconds to give an example of a SMART goal they would like to achieve in the next 4 weeks to improve their physical, mental or social wellbeing based on the effective goal example. Ask one student to share their SMART goal and explain how it's 'SMART' – 75 seconds

Why and when should you raise any health and well-being concerns about yourself, peers or professionals? (1 minute)

- *You need to raise health and well-being concerns promptly if you believe that patient [or colleague or your own] safety or care is being compromised – 22, p. 19, for example if you believe you/a colleague has contracted a communicable disease*
- *'...harder to raise concerns about a peer's health, but you must bring this to the attention of your medical school if you are worried about their safety or well-being.' p. 21*

Key message to get across: Looking out for the health of your peers and responding appropriately is a key part of working in an effective and caring team.

What should you do if you have any health and well-being concerns about yourself, peers or professionals? (90 seconds)

- Report health and well-being issues that can interfere with fitness to practice/study [or teach] to the medical school and placement supervisor' if possible, otherwise to a different member of staff such as your personal tutor non-anonymously so that [they] can take any necessary action to protect patients and help the [student] to get the support they need (24, 25, p. 20 | 28, p. 22).
- Act on the advice given by support systems that the medical school offers you such as occupational health (35, p. 25).
- Register with a local GP to your place of study and seek independent advice regarding well-being or health concerns and comply to any necessary treatment regime that has been advised to improve your health and well-being (28, p. 26).

What you should not do if you have any health and well-being concerns about yourself, peers or professionals? (2 minutes)

- Hide it: as mentioned before your medical school is equipped to help you your medical school will want to help you.
- Diagnose or treat yourself
- Seek treatment from: friends, family, those close to you, medical qualified family members or friends or rely on what you have learnt as a medical student or the views of other students
- Make major changes to your lifestyle before asking the doctor treating you to know if this is safe.

Additional Support to combat stress and maintain or improve your health (1 minute)

- **Peer support:** being supported by other students who have been trained by their medical school to help students with stress, effective methods and maintaining one's well-being.
- **Group sessions on stress management:** importance of exercise and nutrition, coping with stress and ensuring a balanced life. and develop skills for studying
- **Mentoring/buddying schemes:** students paired with senior colleague/junior doctor to find ways to reduce stress.
- **Specific learning support:** assist students to identify their own learning style and develop skills for studying in order to help them work more effectively and reduce stress levels.

Importance of communication (1 minute)

- Communicate with your tutor/occupational health or disability support service - these services are present to provide you with **extra support** that you require. Understand that your ill health could put your studies at risk so seek help.
- Medical schools have a duty to support their students, but students also have to help the school to do this via being **open** and **honest** about their health.
- Being open and trustworthy is an important part of being a Doctor, both patients and GMC expect this of practicing doctors.

Key message to get across: Always keep lines of communication open.

Learning objectives (30 seconds)

Briefly summarise the learning objectives that should have been achieved at the end of the session.

- To understand the importance of health and well-being for effective and safe patient care.
- To learn and apply strategies for improving one health and well-being based on public health guidance and productivity research.
- To learn what steps to take if there are any health and well-being concerns of self, peers and professionals based on the recommendations in the GMC and MSC's guidance: 'Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students'

3 key take home messages (30 seconds)

1. Prioritise **YOUR** health and well-being.
2. Look out for your **PEERS'** health and well-being.
3. **REPORT** any concerns that could affect your performance or that of your peers.

End by discussing final tips and a tool/framework student can use to prioritise their health and well-being:

Actionable tips (75 seconds)

- Schedule your relaxation activities the same way you schedule your appointments, study sessions and meetings.
- When beginning any health change start small and then build up.
- Get an accountability partner who you trust to keep you committed to your goals
- Start keeping a journal to reflect on your experiences to help you assess your physical, mental and social health and well-being.
- Always keep lines of communication open with your peers, personal tutor and medical school.

Five ways to wellbeing (75 seconds)

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice (mindfulness)
- Keep learning
- Give



Image source: <https://www.signals.org.uk/expressyourself-the-five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Give an example for each domain which are on the slide

Resources (including bibliography) – 10 seconds

General Medical Council and Medical Schools Council. 2016. Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students [Online]. Manchester: GMC. Available at: https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Achieving_good_medical_practice_0816.pdf_66086678.pdf (accessed 15 September 2019)

General Medical Council and Medical Schools Council. 2015. Supporting students with mental health conditions [Online]. https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/supporting-students-with-mental-health-conditions-0816_pdf-53047904.pdf (accessed 18 September 2019)

Department of Health and Social Care. 2019. UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf (accessed 13 September 2019)

Healthcare Staff Wellbeing, Burnout, and Patient Safety: A Systematic Review à <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0159015#sec009> (accessed 17 September 2019)

NHS Confederation and Nation Mental Health Development Unit. 2010. Five Ways to Wellbeing: New Application, new ways of thinking.

https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/d80eba95560c09605d_uzm6b1n6a.pdf (accessed 25 September 2019)