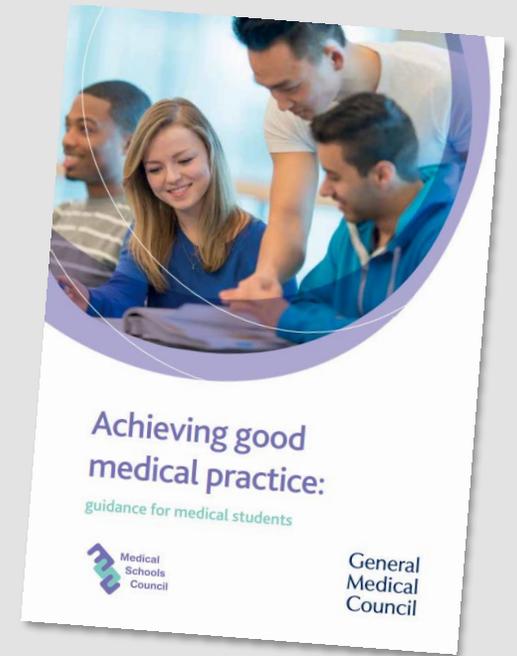




UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Health and well-being for medical students

An exploration.





Learning Outcomes

- 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

- Think about your own ideas of health and well-being.
- Write down a word or a sentence on Padlet.





The importance of well-being and patient safety

- *'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'* (World Health Organisation)
- well-being → *'the state of being healthy and happy'*
- Medicine is a challenging and stressful course and it is normal to feel tired and overwhelmed at times.
- Poor well-being and burnout can be detrimental for patient safety.
- Patient safety → *'prevention of errors and adverse effects to patients associated with health care'*.
- Studies have shown that poor well-being and moderate burnout are associated with reduced patient safety
- It is your duty to raise any concerns regarding your own well-being and the well-being of peers or colleagues

According to the GMC, *'true professionalism is about striving for excellence'. To achieve this you also need to 'develop healthy ways to cope with stress and challenges (resilience)'*



What do medical students say about work- life balance?





Stress is part and parcel of being a full- time medical student and medical practitioner...

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.'*

GMC & MSC (2016). 'Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students', (32), p. 24

...but it must be managed effectively and professionally to ensure patient care and safety are maintained at a high quality.



What do medical students say about work- life balance?

'The only bad thing about med school so far in phase 1 is that it does **take up a lot of your time**. I can still fit in activities, but then I will be **tired** during lectures and **unable to concentrate**. I feel I have to sacrifice one or the other each week. People don't realise it is not necessarily the time **but the exhaustion** from concentrating and working hard that stops you from doing leisure activities and keeping in touch with non-medics.'

'My medical school allows time for leisure activities, but generally you **don't have the energy** both to enjoy leisure activities in time off and to keep up to date with work, as the work and lectures are intellectually challenging.'

'I am **too tired** to do anything at the end of the day – you commit yourself to the course. Before exams, we revise up to ten hours a day. I feel **too tired** and **guilty** to do anything else.'

A good work-life balance is essential for performing **optimally** in a clinical setting and at university. **Developing good habits** early on will serve you well in life as a doctor.



Activity 2

Write down some examples of activities for each of the boxes below

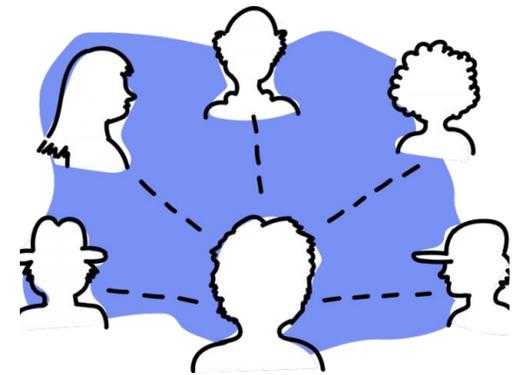
Physical



Mental



Social





Managing physical well-being



150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week
(Department of Health and Social Care, 2019)



2 strength training sessions per week
(Department of Health and Social Care, 2019)



Pick any activity or routine that suits your interests and lifestyle



Commit to eating a balanced diet to maintain high energy levels (complex carbohydrates, protein and unsaturated fats)



Stick to a regular sleep routine as often as possible (e.g. 10 pm to 6 am) – sleep cycle app, phone's flight mode



Managing mental well-being



Potential impacts of poor mental well-being

Reduced concentration

Social withdrawal

Lack of confidence

Poor nutrition



Prevention/Management

Meditation

Reflection (often overlooked and under-appreciated)

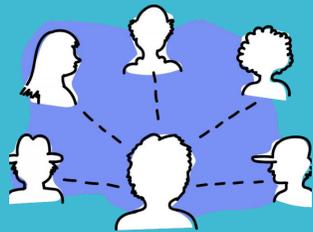
Regular breaks to avoid burnout and manage stress (e.g. 5-minute break per 30 minutes of work)



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.



Managing social well-being



- Community service

- Plan activities with friends and family in advance

- Attend conferences and networking events

- Join student societies (including non-medic ones) and meet new people



Applying what you've just learnt

Example week: Jo, Second Year Medical Student

	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

What gets timetabled gets done! Planning ahead and reflecting on how to best use your schedule is an easy way to prioritise your health and well-being.



How to make an effective goal



Doran, G. T. (1981). 'There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives', Management Review, Vol. 70, Issue 11, pp. 35-36.

Ineffective goal:

'I would like to socialise more'



Effective goal:

I would like to go for a 30-minute jog twice a week'



Activity 3: Come up with your own SMART health and well-being goal that you would like to achieve in the next 4 weeks.



GMC guidance on medical students' health and well- being responsibilities?

- If concerned about 'your levels of anxiety, you should seek help from your general practitioner (GP) and other appropriate sources... at an early stage'. (32, p. 24)
- Students must contact the '*medical school about any serious health problems, or any aspect of your health or personal circumstances that could affect your training... or your relationship with colleagues...*' (40, p. 28)
- '*...Telling your medical school shows you have insight into the impact your condition may have on patients, your fellow students and yourself. This is a crucial factor that medical schools consider in relation to health and fitness to practise.*' (40, p. 28)

Health and well-being is an essential professional responsibility.



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

- *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. (31. p. 24)*
- *'...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)*

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?

- Report health and well-being issues that could interfere with the ability to train or teach to the medical school if possible, otherwise to a different member of staff such as your personal tutor or placement supervisor non-anonymously so that *'they can then take steps to enable the individual 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 (38, p. 26).





What should you not do if you have any health and well-being concerns?

- 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 methods of help to improve your health and well-being

- **Peer support:** students trained and supported by medical school to support their peers in dealing with stress and those who have been through the same problems can provide support which is also effective.
- **Group sessions on stress management:** students provided a chance to discuss problems with peers and given strategies to cope with stress.
- **Mentoring or 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.



The importance of communication

- 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 the GMC expect this of practicing doctors.

Always keep lines of communication open.



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Remember...

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.

It is your professional responsibility as a medical student and a future clinician to ensure the highest quality of safe care for patients are maintained.



Actionable tips

- 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 – we are all here to support one another.



Five ways to well-being

Talk to someone instead of sending an email

Take the stairs not the lift

Visit a new place for lunch



Find a way to give back to your community

Do a crossword or Sudoku



Resources

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_o816.pdf_66086678.pdf (accessed 15 September 2019)

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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)