

Complete list of break out discussion topics

Objectives:

1. To create an opportunity for students and faculty from different Learning Communities to reflect on how wellness is defined and encouraged in their environments.
2. To augment the presentation with our individual perspectives and facilitate application of these concepts to questions and scenarios arising in medical schools nationally.
3. To better understand the interaction of wellness with related issues (duty hours, medical student and faculty burn out, challenges in initiating and maintaining wellness programming).
4. To begin to think about constructive means to support “unwell” students and faculty.
5. To encourage collaborative discussions between students and faculty on the topic of wellness that will continue outside of the space of this presentation.

Was there anything from the “defining wellness” or “best practices” discussion with which you identified? Anything that you found challenging?

How do you think the duty hours regulations affect student and/or resident wellness?

Burnout is defined as “a state of mental and physical exhaustion related to work or caregiving activities.” Medical education historian Kenneth Ludmerer states that the term “burnout” did not appear in medical education contexts until the 1970s. Do you think this was due to a prior lack of recognition? A prior lack of prevalence? Some combination of both?

A 2013 article published in *The Clinical Teacher* entitled “Burnout in medical students: a systematic review” concludes with the following statement: “Future research would need to implement randomized controlled methodology and longitudinal studies to examine the impact of [wellness] interventions throughout the full spectrum of a medical career.” Our presentation today highlighted the lack of systematic research on best practices in medical school wellness programming. What do you think is the role of randomized controlled methodology in improving student wellness?

Once upon a time, a traveller came across three stonecutters and asked them what they were doing. The first replied saying that he was the most miserable person on Earth and that he has the hardest job in the world. “Every day I have to move around huge stones make a living, which is barely enough to eat.” The traveller gave him a coin and continued walking. The second one did not complain and was focused on his work. When the traveller asked him what he was doing, the stonecutter replied “I’m earning a living by doing the best job of stonecutting in the entire county. Although, the work is hard, I’m satisfied with what I do and I earn enough to feed my family.” The traveller praised him, gave him a coin and went on. When the traveller met the third stonecutter, he noticed that the stonecutter had sweat and dust on him but he looked happy and was singing a cheerful song. The traveler was astonished and asked “What are you doing?” The stonecutter looked up with a visionary gleam in his eye and said, “Can’t you see? I am building a cathedral.”

Discuss this parable in the context of medical student well-being. How do you think its message can be used to improve student wellness?

You are a member of your school's Learning Communities faculty leadership, which has a legacy of strong wellness programming. Last year, the student participation in your programming dropped precipitously. It is October and the first events of the year have similar poor attendance. How would you approach this situation?

You are a member of your school's Learning Communities faculty leadership and a quiet student approaches you to discuss his/her participation in the LC wellness activities. "Why can't I just read more for my wellness time? I think I would be feeling "well" if I were more on top of my classes." You have noticed this student has a high level of anxiety and tends to self-isolate in group settings. How would you counsel this student?

You are a member of your school's Learning Communities faculty leadership and one of your students wants the school to fund an early morning meditation and yoga practice. He/she brings literature to support mindfulness practice in medicine and has a draft of the project logistics and finances ready. Is this activity in keeping with your LC's mission? Would you support this idea and if so, how?

You are a member of your school's Learning Communities faculty leadership and there are responsibilities tugging at you from all sides -- you are on inpatient service, your children are home for the holidays, you have a paper that needs another round of revision before submission and there has been considerable discussion in your department about how to acquire tenure. Today you have to talk about wellness in LC. Are you feeling well? Why or why not? What insights will you bring to this conversation about wellness and what insights have you gained from similar conversations?