

Student Wellness Initiatives

Compiled from the AAMC OSR by Dania Daye

Wellness Center (Vanderbilt):

The Wellness Resource Center is dedicated to helping members of the Vanderbilt community develop and increase their awareness of every aspect of wellness. Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence. Wellness is a holistic concept involving physical, spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and environmental dimensions. The Wellness Resource Center is a hub for educational resources, advocacy, and programs about hundreds of wellness-related topics.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/studentrec/wellness/>

Health and Wellness day (Wayne State):

During that day, there were a number of seminars and activities geared at promoting health and wellness including Zumba, "how to reduce stress in medical school" mini-seminar, yoga, healthy eating/cooking seminar, and resources for coping with depression. The event was scheduled on a day with relatively light academic course load for students. It was actually very well done event.

Wellness Committee and Liaisons (Students and Faculty) (Indiana):

Our Wellness Committee consists of a group of student liaisons and several of faculty members that have worked to promote health and wellness to medical students, residents, faculty, and staff at all IUSM campuses across Indiana. Each year, Wellness Liaisons create projects, events, and activities that support balanced living in the six dimensions of wellness: Intellectual, Professional, Emotional, Spiritual, Physical, and Social. Liaisons meet monthly (roughly) and we try to organize activities and events that encourage students, residents, faculty, and staff to seek opportunities outside of the classroom and hospital, to make healthy choices, to be increasingly cognizant of their own personal wellness and self-care, and to promote balanced living. (<http://www.iupui.edu/~mscstaff/?q=node/265>)

In the past several years our committee created a Running Club and this year we were able to purchase T-shirts with our new Wellness logo for them this year. We also began an IUSM Wellness Passport Program incentive program (<http://msa.medicine.iu.edu/wellness/passport/>) to encourage students to explore ways to stay healthy and well, incorporate diverse activities into their daily routines, and achieve balance within the six dimensions. Students received a small prize (IUSM Wellness water bottle) for participating and we also offered a Grand Prize valued at \$200 and several smaller runner up prizes. We also now have an IUSM Wellness Facebook

account and have connected to numerous (250+) students across the state. Other activities included organizing Healthy Lunch Pot-luck meals, organizing/promoting group fitness classes and intramural sports, helping with the Food As Medicine training (for which IUSM provided CME credit), and organizing group outings to local parks. We also participated in Medical Student Affairs (MSA) events such as the Freshman Orientation Activity Fair and the MSA Open House.

Lunchtime seminar series (Louisville):

We have lunchtime seminar series for our first year students regarding mental health and stress management. Essentially our student health psychiatrists give 3 seminars on the above topics and provide their contact information to students should anything come up.

Mind Body Program (Georgetown):

During first year, students elect to join, and one day a week students meet in small groups with a particular faculty advisor to discuss personal issues, stress, life problems, etc. It is completely confidential within the group. If they enjoy the program they can elect to continue through second year as well. I personally didn't do it, but it is very popular at our school and many people find it to be a great release from the everyday stress of med school.

Student Wellness Curriculum (MSU):

First off, we have a student wellness curriculum that includes a few required events in which we talk about issues, get resources on where to get help if we need it and also allows faculty to check in on students throughout the year.

However, I think the biggest (and best) component of our wellness program is centered around stressful study periods before big exams. Our school offers optional wellness activities such as yoga, massages, ice cream socials, study snacks, perpetual free coffee, and (best of all) pet therapy dogs! They invite therapy dogs to come into med school for a few hours and us students really enjoy some time playing with dogs to relax.

Stress-relief sessions prior to exams (Nevada):

We just started our Wellness Program at the University of Nevada School of Medicine this year. One of the most well received wellness programs are stress-relief sessions a couple weeks before an exam. We have a one or two yoga classes that week and hire local massage therapist students to give back massages outside the classroom.

Peer Counseling System (UTMB):

At UTMB, we have a Students Against Depression organization. They sponsor a breakfast before the first year's first test, provide healthy snacks outside of the library during busy times of the semester, and sponsor social activities throughout the year. They also head a student counseling program where trained students meet with peers that are stressed or struggling.

Health Week (UTMB):

Our student life office also hosts a type of Health week in the Spring to encourage exercise and healthy eating. We also have a Stress Less Fest in the Spring. We have done this for 2 years now and it has been early well received by the students. We have lunch seminars throughout the week talking about how to organize studies, how to take a break and calm down, etc. The faculty have been volunteering to give these lectures and work with the Stress Less team to plan topics each year. During this week we also have a big social dinner on campus and bring in massage therapists.

Fitness Center and Student-organized activities (Virginia Tech):

Our affiliated hospital owns and operates their own health and fitness club so all student receive free membership when they matriculate. Students have also started regular sporting events like a pick up basketball game on Sunday mornings and soccer on Friday afternoons. We have a club for Student Wellness and Outdoor Life (SWOL) that helps organize outdoor events, trips, races, MedWars, etc. Last year the office of student affairs offered a weekly session on practicing mindfulness as a way to reduce stress and improve focus. Finally, we have staff in the office of student affairs and an impartial unaffiliated counseling service available to students in need.

Wellness Retreat (Dartmouth):

Dartmouth sponsored a one-day wellness retreat with focus groups and a keynote speaker (Dr. Derby) (big name in wellness) that brought forth many issues about how students feel about different types of care on campus. Retreat resulted in recruitment of an additional mental health professional specifically for medical students (medical students voiced that they were having difficulty accessing resources so taxed by undergrads already). Dartmouth also has a Little sib/big sib program that is very popular among students.