Program of Assistance for Students (PAS)

The Counseling Center at TTUHSC

CounselingCenter@ttuhsc.edu
You Might Be a Medical Student If..

1. Your trash is overflowing and your bank account isn’t
2. Your social circle is now called a study group
3. Your idea of feeding the poor is buying yourself some Ramen Noodles
4. You average four hours of sleep a night and you get six on a really good night
5. You question if brewing is really a necessary step in the consumption of coffee
6. You find yourself googling the words “espresso IV drip”
7. Antacid tablets become your primary source of nutrition
Stress Continuum

“Normal” Stress
- Time Pressures
- Exams & Fear of Failure
- Financial Challenges
- Competition for Good Grades

Traumatic Stress
- Impairment

Cumulative Stress
- Burnout/Impairment
Stress Can Be Beneficial

- Experiencing some stress is beneficial
  - Helps concentration/focus and improves performance
- But only if it’s managed!
Path to Burnout

• As stress increases and persists, the negative consequences of stress also increase

• WHO defines burnout as a “state of vital exhaustion”

• 28%-45% of medical students report burnout

• The progression towards burnout:
  – Stress Arousal
  – Energy Conservation
  – Exhaustion
Warning Signs of Burnout

• Persistent symptoms of stress (e.g., headache, upset stomach or heartburn, irritability/frequent arguments, forgetfulness, sleep problems)
• Social withdrawal
• Skipping classes, missing deadlines
• Cynical attitude
• Increased substance use/misuse
• Apathy or loss of empathy
• Chronic fatigue
• Depression and/or suicidality
BURNOUT RISK FACTORS:
Unrealistic Expectations

- Must know everything there is to know
- Must honor every class
- Must appear strong; can’t show true feelings
- Must please everyone (family, friends, romantic partners, classmates)
- Can’t ask for help, because it’s a sign of weakness
What Can You Do?

• Managing stress is important
• Another key consideration is to develop...
Resilience

• **What is it?**

  The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress – the ability to bounce back

• **It is ORDINARY**

  – not extraordinary

• **It does NOT mean you won’t experience difficulty or distress**
Primary Factor

- Primary factor contributing to resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family.

  Relationships that create love and trust, provide role models, and offer encouragement and reassurance bolster a person’s resilience.
10 Ways to Build Resilience

• Make connections
• Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems
• Accept that change is part of living
• Move toward your goals
• Take decisive actions

• Look for opportunities for self-discovery
• Nurture a positive view of yourself
• Keep things in perspective
• Maintain a hopeful outlook
• Take care of yourself
Getting Started

• FIRST - Understand yourself!
  – What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
  – How have these events typically affected me?

• Stay flexible
  – Let yourself experience strong emotions and realize when you may need to avoid them
  – Step forward and take action to deal with your problems and step back to rest and reenergize
Finding Balance

- Slow down
- Start with a goal in mind
- Take one piece at a time
- Push yourself to the edge of your abilities
- Get feedback
- Vary your approach
- Review your progress
- Ask for help!
Program of Assistance for Students
806.743.1327 or 800.327.0328

• Brief Counseling Services
  – 6 free counseling sessions per academic year (Sep – Aug)
  – Daytime (M-F) and evening (M-Th) appointments available
  – Individual concerns (e.g., grief and loss, anxiety, stress)
  – Family and relationship concerns

• 24-Hour Crisis Line *(by calling the #s above after hours)*

• Email for appointments: CounselingCenter@ttuhsc.edu
PAS Services Are Confidential!

• All PAS counselors are licensed by the State of Texas
  – State laws protect confidentiality!
  – If you access PAS counseling, it will not be reported to the SOM Office of Student Affairs and it will not become part of your student records

• PAS counseling offices are located on the first floor, east wing of TTUHSC (1A300), just beyond the Psychiatry Clinic
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www.ttuhsce.edu/centers-institutes/counseling/