

**The American Medical Student Association
presents...**

Medical Student Well-Being: Let's Get Interactive!

Program Guide



**Created by Eric Hodgson
2000-2001 Director of Student Programming**

Medical Student Well-Being—Let's get interactive!

Program Guide

Purpose: The purpose of this fun program is to provide a time for students in your chapter to think about the issue of wellness while in medical school (and to color!). It is probably best in a group of ten people or less if there is only one facilitator. If there are a few people who can help facilitate small group discussions, then the number of participants can grow. You might want to use this program for the current leaders in your chapter, maybe with future leaders as a way to get to know each other better, or you can open it up to interested people in your chapter.

Overview: This program takes from 50 minutes to about one hour and a half, depending on the group. The first part requires the facilitator to lead a brief discussion on What is Well Being, then a brief discussion about AMSA's role in this issue (a quiz demonstrates some of the reasoning!), then some statistics are given to talk about repercussions of the lack of well-being—depression, suicide, drug/alcohol use or impairment, and marital dissatisfaction. Participants will then be given paper and some crayons and are directed to draw a picture that describes their life in med school, change of viewpoints since entering school, or pretty much whatever they want. When finished, the participants will share their pictures with each other in a small group setting as a way of opening up communication about the issues of well-being. After this, each person is encouraged to talk a little about what parts of medicine continue to inspire them.

Supplies: Flip Chart/Markers
Chalkboard
Art paper (can buy a Sketch Book and tear out pieces)
Crayons/Markers/art things
Music—it might be nice to have a CD player or tape to play in the beginning of the program to set the mood and also during the drawing portion of the program!

Setup: Arrange chairs in a circle (or sit on the floor) with the chalkboard/flip chart in the front.

Facilitator: This is really a low stress-facilitating job. It requires mostly just direction to encourage other participants. Before you begin the program, you might want to set up the **ground rules**. (I've run this program several times and have had no unhappy participants. These ground rules are just standard practice for small groups.)

*Encourage everyone to participate at his or her own level of comfort.

*Remind the group that everyone is responsible for how this activity turns out!

*Ask that everyone maintain confidentiality if anything occurs in the group that is meant to be more private.

*Ask everyone to actively listen, try to refrain from judgments, and to allow all people time to talk (no one hogs the conversation).

- Invite participants to add other rules and ask if everyone agrees.

THE PROGRAM

I What is Well-Being? (About 5-7 minutes)—This is just to get people to start thinking about the topic. Don't go into too much detail)

Have participants brainstorm what well-being means to them...write on board if possible.

Some possible things are: stress management, adequate sleep, exercise, good food, time for fun, relationships, not feeling down about school, spirituality, Mind/body/spirit connections, family support, etc.

*Ask about the general things that promote well-being at your school.

*Ask about things that detract from well being at your school.

II Why is Med Student Well-Being a Strategic Priority at AMSA? (5-6 minutes)

As you know, Well Being is one of the three strategic Priorities of AMSA. (The other two are Universal Health Care and Diversity in Medicine).

The following quiz is a fun way to raise some of the issues of why we chose this issue to focus energy, time and resources upon!) The big points to take from this are:

1. Since I'm paying for school I should have a reasonable ability to influence how things go (i.e. test schedules, grading, etc.)
2. We are entering a profession that has a lot of negativity surrounding it at the present time. It is quite a non-supportive atmosphere and environment, and many physicians in the academic setting are not as concerned about positively encouraging medical students and often serve as poor role models in this area
3. Medicine is a demanding profession that takes up a lot of time, has incredible amounts of stress and can impact other areas of our lives

QUIZ—This will give some of the reasoning behind why AMSA has chosen WB as a strategic initiative—have the students score themselves giving themselves one point for every yes answer they give

TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT:

1. I am being paid a lot of money to go to medical school.
2. During the med school interview process and during the time I've been in med school, I have been told repeatedly that I can have any career I desire and that I will be a success in my chosen field.
3. Almost all of the physicians or medical students I have spoken with told me that they are well rested, love their work, feel little stress, and have time for their family.

If you answered **yes** to these questions give yourself one point for each yes....

Check the number of points...most people will have zero or one point.

If you did not get three points in this quiz, then you will understand why **AMSA has chosen medical student well-being to be a top priority for the coming year. You might then reiterate the main points as stated above for each of the points of the quiz.**

III. Some statistics and facts about Well-being--

The point of this part is to show that there has been documented proof of the effects of a lack of well being in medical school ranging from depression, suicide, drug dependence/ abuse, and marital difficulties.

Did You Know That:

- 12% of all medical students become clinically depressed during their medical student years/ 30% of all interns
- Medical students show higher rates of substance abuse when compared to matched pharmacy students with equal access to medications.
- Each year, physician suicide removes from the U.S. a number of physicians equal to the size of a med school graduating class. Physicians have twice the rate of suicides of the general public.
- In a med school class, >98% of the students reported some form of abuse (verbal, physical) during their time as a medical student.
- In one study of marital satisfaction, 50 percent of docs said they had an unhappy marriage and attributed this to their career.

IV What has AMSA been working on in regards to this issue?

Ask if anyone has heard about the **Med Student Bill of Rights (MSBR)**...

The **MSBR** is the cornerstone of our work with well-being. It is a list of rights and responsibilities inherent in being a medical student.

- Formed and adopted in AMSA's House of Delegates two years ago by concerned students
- revised last year to include testing accommodations

The initiative has two areas of focus:

Local initiatives:

--sessions at Chapter Officer's Conference were done to teach the chapter officers about the initiative. At that time, we did a survey to see what types of programming the local chapter would be inclined to do. This information was compiled and distributed to the Chapter Officers via email and is available on the website along with a survey that can be used at the local level to assess interest in the issue..

Other ways this is being focused on the local level is through Humanistic Medicine Interest Group programming, along with presentations on Well-Being at regional AMSA conferences.

On the National Level...

--We have been working with Karen Jagatic, a PhD candidate, who is doing her dissertation on mistreatment of students in professional school. AMSA is putting a link to her survey on our website

--HuMed National Retreat in Florida in First Weekend of January

--Working with Pali Delevitt, a faculty person at Duke who was hired to incorporate Wellness programming into the medical school curriculum. With her assistance, we are working to create a focus group of deans, faculty persons, and students to act as a focus group to direct the planning of this initiative. (referring to the docs)

--Students can work at AMSA National Offices doing a Well-Being Internship to write grants and write documents to be used at the local level.

V Ok...enough talking...Let's draw!

“We would like to spend some time examining our thoughts and feelings in relation to a medical career and/or medicine in general. For example...

Show an example...

(this is a picture that a member drew...it is folded because much of the time it is like the blank side...She feels like she is not even really there (not really a part of the team or noticed)

Other times, (fold over the picture to show the small figure) She just feels really small, just someone who follows the attending around. In fact, she said, she followed the male attending into the bathroom because she was just following him blindly. Also, she just feels a lot of weight on her shoulders because of the sheer mass of books in her white coat, and, finally, because no one is supposed to carry the stethoscope around the neck, (notice the attending), she feels that she is constantly getting caught by her stethoscope...just one more hassle...

(More examples)

Read this! ---The task: You have twenty minutes to draw a picture that shows your thoughts and feelings about medical school and a medical career. You can draw whatever you like—it doesn't have to be a sad tale or a horror story...this is just a time to think a little bit about you in relation to medicine. You might want to draw about things that make it hard to achieve well-being, things that you like about medicine, things you would like to see improved...whatever you would like. When you are done, we'll talk about what we drew in a group.

Give 20 minutes to draw pictures...As time permits, have people share what they drew and explain it to the large group.

VI After everyone talks about their picture, you might want to talk a little bit about why we chose to draw pictures about this stuff. You might want to ask if it was a hard thing to talk about, easy thing to do, etc...if people liked the activity

VII Why did we do this?

1. Med school is often perceived as grueling and isolating...it is important for us to hear that others are having some difficulty and that everyone feels some level of distress due to the process.
2. It is important to have a place/group of people where we can talk honestly about how we are doing...med school breeds over-achievers and people who hate to look like they aren't on top of everything, so these groups are important.
3. Drawing is fun! Good stress reliever and sometimes it's easier to draw something than to talk about it...

VIII We want to End on a Positive Note:

Ask each person to go around the room to talk about what brings you joy/what is cool about becoming a doctor...Things that really make it all worthwhile. You can go around the room to get one positive thing about medicine from each person.

Collect the pictures! Ask if you can collect the pictures from the participants. We are trying to collect the pictures to make a display at National Convention. If you do collect some, send 'em to me! I will reimburse you the cost of mailing!

**DSP (Eric Hodgson)
AMSA
1902 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191**

You're Done! Congrats! Please direct any feedback to me at dsp@www.amsa.org, 1800.767.2266 ext 270. **GOOD WORK!**

