

Learn the 4 key elements of medical student well-being

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The rigors of medical school are famous. What has gained infamy are the potential results of the demands of this first portion of medical training: Stress and burnout.

Managing stress on an individual level requires understanding personal strategies to maintain well-being. One of the first steps in formulating a plan to manage your medical school stress is understanding the elements of well-being.

A module in the AMA Medical Student Leadership Learning Series—entitled "Managing Stress While Leveraging Your Unique Experiences"—offers guidance for medical students on stress management and personal well-being.

"Leadership is not determined by a title," said Ann Manikas, the AMA's director of organizational development and learning. "It's not a position. It can show up in informal ways early on."

One of five modules to help develop tomorrow's leaders in health care, the series covers topics such as conflict resolution and collaboration. These 20-minute, interactive modules offer advice, realistic scenarios and printable resources.

Elements of student well-being

While numerous factors play into a medical student's well-being, knowing them gives students a baseline to assess their stress level and areas where it can be more effectively managed.

Here are the four factors the module lists in a student's personal well-being.

Physical. This factor requires maintaining a nutritional diet, regular exercise and sleep hygiene—striving for seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Students should also be sure to get regular check-ups with a physician and work to manage any known pre-existing health conditions.

Emotional. Negative emotions and reactions are natural, but having awareness of them can help students change them. It can also help to speak to friends and family in your support system about your problems and how you might find solutions to them.

Social. Having an outlet and speaking to others in your support system can help a student identify their problems and come up with potential solutions.

Sense of purpose. If you're pursuing a career in medicine, you are likely an altruistic individual. Understanding your core values and how they align with your career can be invaluable.

Learning to lead?

The medical student leadership modules are among the many benefits available exclusively to AMA members. The AMA is with its members every step of the way. For medical students, that means the AMA provides resources to thrive—academically and in charting your career—throughout your four years of undergraduate medical education.