BACKGROUND

In addition to providing individual advising about student life issues and leading learning environment and mistreatment initiatives, the Office of Medical Student Wellness (OMSW) develops and implements a wide range of programs and events to enable Stanford medical students to thrive academically and personally throughout their medical school experience. These programs are informed by the following guiding principles:

- Empower students to develop their professional identity and find meaning within their medical school experience
- Enable students to succeed as lifelong leaders
- Embrace the value of diversity and personal growth throughout the journey
- Encourage self-care, resiliency, wellness and the pursuit of one’s passions
- Engage all individuals in the promotion of a sense of belonging

MAJOR EVENTS & PROGRAMS

The Stanford Wilderness Education Active orientation Trip (SWEAT) is a pre-orientation wilderness trip for incoming medical students led by second-year medical students who complete a wilderness medicine and leadership course. SWEAT aims to enhance students’ sense of belonging to the Stanford University School of Medicine community, foster relationships that last throughout medical school, and build students’ confidence to tackle the physical and mental challenges that medical school brings. In 2014, over 90% of incoming students participated in the elective trip, and more than 20 second-year students returned to serve as trip leaders.

The Stanford Medical School Cup (SMS Cup) is an annual field day event to foster community building within and between learning communities. Faculty members serve as team coaches and cheer for their students as they engage in friendly competition in a series of events including relay races, dodge ball, and trivia. Students have called it a “great way to de-stress” and an “opportunity to spend time with classmates, older students, and faculty mentors.” In 2014, more than 100 students, faculty, and staff members participated.

CURRICULAR INITIATIVES

OMSW promotes wellness in the Pre-Clerkship Curriculum via several methods. First, we participate in New Student Orientation by leading a session entitled Promoting Personal Wellness and staffing several wellness-related tables at the Resource Fair. We also encourage students to register for wellness elective courses, and we provide additional curricular resources and support for sensitive topics identified in the pre-clerkship curriculum.

Be Predictable

The Bike Safety Program was initially developed by medical students to promote bike safety and help change bike safety culture at Stanford University. OMSW co-sponsors the program along with Parking & Transportation Services. All incoming students are asked to sign an online bike safety pledge in exchange for receiving a bike helmet and safety kit. In 2014, 86 of the 95 incoming medical and masters’ students pledged to wear their helmets and follow the rules of the road. Survey data from last year indicated that 6 months after signing the pledge, 79% of students reported helmet use and 87% reported bike light use.

Ears for Peers (E4P) is a student-to-student peer listening group for the Stanford University School of Medicine community. Our trained E4P counselors provide free and confidential counseling to School of Medicine students. We hope to provide a comfortable place for students to discuss anything from everyday frustrations to stress, academics, research, clinics, family issues, mental health, and relationships, to name just a few possible topics. The E4P counselors are School of Medicine students themselves who are trained in peer counseling techniques.
To prepare students for the Clerkship Curriculum, OMSW hosts the annual Transition to Clerkship Retreat at Fogarty Winery in Woodside, CA. The purpose of this annual retreat for students transitioning from the pre-clerkship to clerkship curriculum is to celebrate the completion of their classroom education and learn about life in clerkships. In 2014, the keynote speaker was Dr. Carol Dweck, Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford, who encouraged students to adopt a growth mindset as they enter clerkships. Students appreciated the opportunity to interact with faculty from their first clerkship and commented that the retreat felt like “a mini graduation and right of passage.”

STUDENT LEADERS

OMSW oversees the Student Wellness Leadership Team, comprised of pre-clerkship and clerkship students who lead wellness programs for their peers. The team consists of several different committees, each focused on a different dimension of wellness (physical, emotional/spiritual, social, intellectual, professional). This group collaborates closely with the Stanford Medical Student Association Wellness Team, a group of students within the medical student governing body who also focus on promoting wellness. Thus far in 2014, student wellness leaders have been instrumental in helping to plan OMSW’s major events and have also developed their own programs including reflection groups, a big sib program, and an advice guide for first-year students.

POLICY EDUCATION & SUPPORT

OMSW is responsible for providing ongoing education and support regarding policies and procedures related to mistreatment, infectious exposures, disability insurance, and substance abuse and addictions, among others.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

A critical component of OMSW’s work involves ongoing assessment of medical students’ wellness needs and evaluation of our wellness programs. Stanford medical students take the Learning Environment and Wellness Survey annually to assess their well-being related to four areas: stress, mental health, empathy, and the learning environment. In 2013, findings revealed that in the third year of medical school, empathy, mental health, and learning environment quality were slightly reduced, and student stress was slightly elevated, suggesting the importance of wellness programming for clerkship students.

In Fall 2014, OMSW administered the OMSW Start-of-Year Survey to assess medical students’ interest in programming across a range of wellness topics. Respondents identified stress management, exercise, nutrition, sleep, and relationships as the topics that interested them most. Also in 2014, Stanford medical students Megan Roosen-Runge and Jessie Liu conducted the Barriers to Self-Care in Medical School Study, which involved a survey (n=171) and discussion groups (n=17) to assess the self-care habits students tend to sacrifice, barriers to self-care, protective factors, and desired programs to promote self-care. Respondents indicated that the greatest barriers to their self-care were lack of time, lack of energy, and the culture of medicine; there was increased perception among clinical students that the culture of medicine and lack of energy are significant barriers.

OMSW is encouraged by 2014 Association of American Medical Colleges Graduation Questionnaire data indicating that the percentage of Stanford medical students who are very satisfied with the School’s programs and activities to promote well-being is increasing and is higher than the All Schools average.

How satisfied are you with student programs/activities that promote effective stress management, a balanced lifestyle and overall well-being?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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