Stress-less Success©

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- All information is Confidential: except as required by law
- Referrals: Community providers and/or for medication
  - Centers: phone sessions or webcam
- Wellness oriented philosophy
- Websites
  - Counseling Services & Wellness: http://counseling.medicine.iu.edu/
  - IUSM Wellness: http://msa.iusm.iu.edu/wellness/
  - Facebook: IU School of Medicine Health & Wellness
The following are collected quotes from past students as well as tips from the Office of Counseling Services & Wellness.

Each dimension of wellness has a section.

~Intellectual~

You can't nor do you have to learn it all. Be ok with P = MD.

- In case of unexpected conditions/uncontrollable emotions:
  - You can ask for exam extension (ex. illness, death, accidents, etc.).
  - You can ask for a leave of absence available (ex. depression/high anxiety).
  - Talk to Profs, mentor, preceptor, counselor or administrators! Let us know!

- Reading & Studying Strategies
  - Ask upper class students to identify highest yield texts/resources and use them the most.
  - Old practice exams are invaluable.
    - work through these tests a few days prior to the test
  - Use the Board Review Series.

  “Cramming is the dumbest, most painful mistake to make in med school!!!”

- Books are printed conversations: Think about a discussion.
  - What is the main point?
  - Why are they saying that?
  - Can you explain the barebones, 12 y/o?
    - If not,.....STOP, PAUSE, & REFLECT!

- Pacing
  - Read the amount of text measured between index finger to thumb. Make it like a conversation: listen, ask questions, and make statement.
  - Stop, Pause & Reflect
  - What is the main point?
  - Why are they saying that?
  - Can you explain the barebones to a 12 year old?
    - If not STOP, PAUSE and REREAD, ASK QUESTIONS
  - Relate it to things you know, people you know. That hooks into the brain deeper, longer.
“Even though you have to memorize to do well, focus more on learning & understanding as it is crucial for the boards as well as being a doctor.”

- Speed
  - Use your hand for pacing.
  - Keep your hand moving.
  - Are you speeding, stalled or too slow?
  - Lip reading slows reading.
  - Use writing & speaking to engage more senses to enhance learning.

- Exams
  - “The more you learn now, the less you will have to cram for step 1.”
  - “I studied earlier, a week before the test rather than 2 days, like I did in undergrad.”
  - “Use anatomy coloring books and make 20 copies of the heart, brain, etc.”
  - “During exams, even if you think you are clueless push through the questions, you might know the next one.”
  - “During exams block out all other stresses.”
  - “…2 weeks prior to exams are going to suck, I’ll be studying for literally the entire day for 2 weeks, and I’ll have no social life. Once you realize this is the way it is....it makes it a little easier to bear. Also, you know everyone else will be doing the same thing...that makes it a lot easier.”
  - “Have everything outside of school in order (groceries, cleaning, etc.) so that you can just focus on school for 2-3 weeks during exams.
  - “Everyone leaves an exam thinking that they failed. RELAX. If you don’t pass, meet with the professor for advice/guidance before the next exam.”

- Time Management
  - “Priorities need to be consistent with personal & educational goals. This requires a periodic review. 15 minute weekly planning sessions are ideal.”
  - Organizing time
    - Create semester calendar: add exams, breaks, other essential; note short, intermediate & long range goals.
    - Weekly calendar: Spend 15 minutes week with weekly calendar planning time.
    - Block time for essentials: sleep, eat, shower, exercise, classes, study time, shopping, bills, etc.,
  - Prioritizing
    - A = vital
    - B = important
    - C = nice
    - D = time wasters
    - Subdivides tasks into A1, A2, A3, ..., B1, B2, ...
    - A, B, C categories correspond to Quadrants I, II, III, IV on table below.
    - Daily: review prior day's tasks for incomplete activities, reschedule as prioritized.
- Review today's prescheduled events/appointments/tasks.
- Keep your books /study space organized.
- Take 5-10 minute chunks to organize/file.

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<th>Franklin Covey® Time Management Matrix</th>
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~Physical~

“I made a decision not to sacrifice my entire life just to be at the top of the class.”

- Our bodies are meant to move!
- Studies show that exercise decreases risk for uncontrolled stress, anxiety and depression. It releases endorphins to improve our sense of wellbeing.
- Make exercise fun/pleasurable.
- Ideal: work towards 10,000 steps/day: wear your pedometers.

“...after an exam, take a break...before you start studying for the next exam during blocks.”

- Get a good night’s sleep prior to the test. Your brain needs rest and integration time to encode the information.
- Set 2 “opportunity clocks” before exams so that you are up and out the door.
Practice diaphragmatic breathing:

Inhale & exhale - 3 sections
abdomen/middle-upper chest

• Inhale 4 counts
• Exhale 4 counts
continue until mind calm & clear

D. Breathing O2 by 20%
Resting brain uses: 20% O2.
Your brain rests little!

“Studying while I am really tired is a waste of time, so I just go to bed.”

• Plan breaks into your day & time off.
• Take power naps—either sleep no more than 20 minutes or you will need 2 hours to avoid the sleep hangover feeling.
• Plan 30-60 minutes of leisure before bed to allow your brain to slow down for restful sleep.

Nutrition

o See wellness website for recipes: http://msa.iusm.iu.edu/wellness/
o Cook once a week and freeze.
o Eat with friends once a week to break isolation.
o Think of the color palette: have you had foods from the rainbow daily or at least weekly?

~Social~

“Regard your free time as a valuable commodity and make the most of it.”

• Give yourself time to socialize.
• Build yourself into a community.
• Loneliness and isolation feeds depression—yum!

“Don’t binge drink, that’s just not a good idea.”

• Alcohol disrupts the sleep cycle. You will fall asleep more easily. In 2-3 hours you will begin to stir
and your deep sleep is interrupted. It also interferes with memory.

• Blog to family/friends to save time.
o schedule
o thoughts/feelings
o what went well
o remember to maintain confidentiality
• Join student organizations to keep yourself motivated and engaged. It reminds you of the bigger
dream.
• Join non-related groups.
• Maintain non-medical friendships.

• “Keep your relationships strong. When you hit a brick wall in your studies, you will rely on them.”
Students with significant others:
- Schedule date nights and family nights.
- Create leaving and returning rituals that are welcoming and relaxed.
- Find small ways of connecting daily. Even 5 minutes at a time can help.
- Trade baby sitting with another couple.
- Let significant others know when you need some love and attention.
- Counseling Services & Wellness is for your significant others too.

"Study with a friend every couple of days it breaks the isolation. Be sure that your friend is as motivated to study as you are."

~Emotional~

"Look for moments for reflection, fun and hobbies."

• Compare yourself to yourself. Comparing yourself to others will either improve your mood at the expense of others because you put someone in an inferior position; or you will feel worse because you placed yourself in the inferior position. Either way, it is a slippery slope and can lead to anxiety and depression. You can only improve yourself. Do you know more than you knew last week? How are you progressing toward your goals? If you are stalled, where can you make changes? Who can assist you?

• Develop and increase your self-awareness and self care.
  - Create a tool box of things that nourish your body, mind, emotions and spirit.

• Discovery and find a safe person to explore your feelings.
• Feelings are like waves: they build, rise, peak & decline in about 20 minutes if you don’t add more fuel to the emotion.
  - Ask yourself:
    - What am I feeling?
    - What is the worst part about that?
    - Is that a balanced view?
    - Are there alternative thoughts or solutions?
    - What do I need to get through this?
    - How can I give this to myself?
    - What would I say to a friend?

• Give & ask for Unconditional Love
  - We all have value & worth regardless of grades or profession.
  - Telling yourself that you are a disappointment / failure can lead to depression!

• Meditation and yoga allow us to disengage from the constant “busyness and connectivity.”
  - Inner focus provides an opportunity for the experience of calm and peace.
  - In the years of 2010 we receive more information in 1 day than our ancestors in medieval times would experience in their entire life!

• Monitor moods: if declining book a wellness session.
  "Do NOT burn bridges! You see these people every day for 2 years in your preclinical years."
• Practice forgiving yourself for:
  o Saying no
  o Not exercising
  o Eating junk food
  o Needing love
  o Relationship endings
  o Being irritable
  o Not mastering the first time you try something new
  o Being #5 or #330 in your class
  o Failed test
  o Procedural error
  o Poor behavior
  o Patient death

• CELEBRATE the small SUCCESSES!!!
• Schedule a Date night with your partner.
• Ask someone for a date: your colleagues are as lonely as you are.

~Professional~

“Classmates and professors are there more to help you become a better doctor than to compete with or give grades.”

• Turn off the TV, computer, phones at home and rest!!!

• Consider Multivitamins-
  o Stress depletes B complex vitamins.
  o Can help avoid exam time colds
  o Practice autogenic/relaxation exercises

• Don’t wait: Ask for help as soon as you recognize you are declining or someone points it out, it saves time in the long run.

• Cheating: BEWARE!!!!!! DANGER!!! DON’T DO IT! Ask for help!
  Integrity & Reputation Matter. Get help with your stress and studying. It is better to withdraw and leave with your integrity in tact than carry the guilt and shame.

  “Treat school as a job. Study a little bit more almost every day.
  Don’t take 2 days in a row off, you will get way behind.”

  • Crush the unhealthy guilt trap=guilt if you are studying and guilt if you are relaxing, sleeping, etc. Say no to unhealthy guilt!
  • Learn to say no without unhealthy guilt: "I’d love to but I’m already booked…"

  Schedule regular shadowing or medical mission trips: “Seeing patients gave me something to work toward…it actually made me want to study so I knew what I was seeing in the clinic.”

~Spiritual~

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality: Spirituality can refer to an ultimate or immaterial reality, an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being; or the “deepest values and meanings by which people live.” Spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer, and contemplation are intended to develop an individual's inner life; such practices often lead to an experience of connectedness with a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; with other individuals or the human community; with
nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm. Spirituality is often experienced as a source of inspiration or orientation in life. It can encompass belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world.

- Remember the bigger picture — wellness, goals
  - “…weekly religious study kept me centered & remembering the big picture.”

- Mindfulness meditation: “a technique of meditation in which distracting thoughts and feelings are not ignored but are rather acknowledged and observed nonjudgmentally as they arise to create a detachment from them and gain insight and awareness.” (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition. © 2009, Elsevier).

- Meditation “is a holistic discipline during which time the practitioner trains his or her mind in order to realize some benefit. Meditation oftentimes involves invoking and cultivating a feeling or internal state, such as compassion, or attending to some focal point, etc. The term can refer to the process of reaching this state, as well as to the state itself.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation)

- Develop a hobby:
  - Art
  - Poetry
  - Pottery
  - Photography
  - Glass blowing
  - Music
  - Writing
  - Reading
  - Dancing
  - Hiking

- Give yourself mini-breaks throughout the day. If you hear yourself saying/thinking “I want to quit” then stop doing what you are doing, relax, exercise, call a friend and be at peace with needing down time.

- Volunteer in clinically related activities it reminds you of why you want to become a physician.
- Take time to remember why you came to med school, remember your dream. Experience it with all your senses! What we think about we bring about!

In closing, remember to ask for help sooner rather than later! We are all here to help you succeed! We have a huge shortage of physicians in the U.S. Your special gifts and your talents are different from anyone else in your class. Each of you will contribute your unique gifts to the art and science of healing. Do not hesitate to call if I can help in any way! Good luck and savor your journey!

Kind regards,
Suzanne

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Wellness website: http://msa.iusm.iu.edu/wellness/