

BUILDING RESIDENT RESILIENCE: Teaching Residents a Skill Based Approach to Coping with Stress

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BACKGROUND

The expectation that a resident will develop the competency to balance their personal and professional priorities to sustain their long term career and life goals is embedded in the CanMEDS Manager and Professional roles¹.

Stress in medical training and its effects on wellbeing and performance have been well documented in the literature^{2,3}. There is some evidence that teaching stress management and coping skills to postgraduate trainees can reduce their perceived levels of stress^{2,4}. In a survey of postgraduate Program Directors at the University of Toronto, 83% of those who responded to the survey (23/73 Program Directors) identified "Practical skills for personal and professional stress management" as the number one wellness topic they would like to offer their trainees. Almost half (48%) dedicated 2 or fewer hours of curricular time to wellness topics and 74% felt they didn't have educators in their department able to deliver this material.

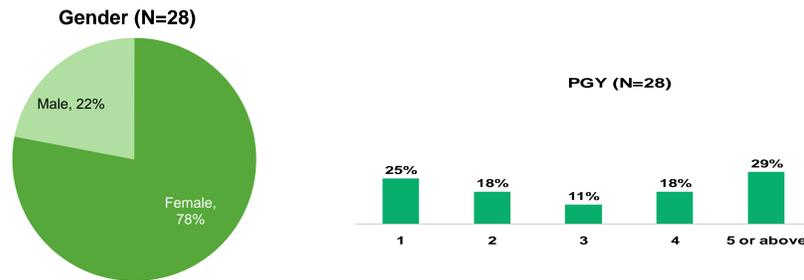
Additionally, the two most prevalent problems in postgraduate trainees seen in the Office of Resident Wellness at the University of Toronto from 2006-10 were anxiety and stress (34% and 27% of all visits respectively). Many of these residents reported low confidence in their abilities to effectively manage their stress.

¹Jason R. Frank et al, The CanMEDS 2005 Physician Competency Framework, Office of Education, The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; ²Yao, D. and Wright, S. The challenge of problem residents, J Gen Intern Med 2001;16:486-92.; ³Worley L. Our fallen peers: a mandate for change. Acad Psychiatry. 2008;32:8-12; ⁴Shapiro S., Shapiro D and Schwartz G., Stress management in medical education: a review of the literature. Acad Med. 2000;75(7):748-59.

WORKSHOPS

In 2008, the Office of Resident Wellness (ORW), with financial support from the Ontario Medical Association, began offering residents and fellows the opportunity to participate in ½ day workshops entitled "**Building Resident Resilience: A Skill Based Approach to Coping**" with the goals of increasing trainees' awareness of their own attitudes and behaviours compromising optimal resilience to stress, and teaching specific mindfulness and cognitive behavioural skills to manage life challenges. Pre and post workshop questionnaires were distributed at the two most recent workshops, and follow up questionnaires were distributed 4 months post workshop to determine: 1) resident confidence in effective stress management and 2) whether this was affected by attendance at the workshop.

WHO COMES?



WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM THIS WORKSHOP?

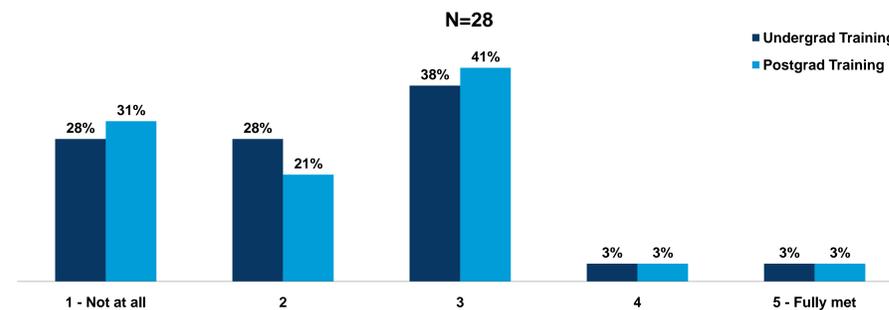
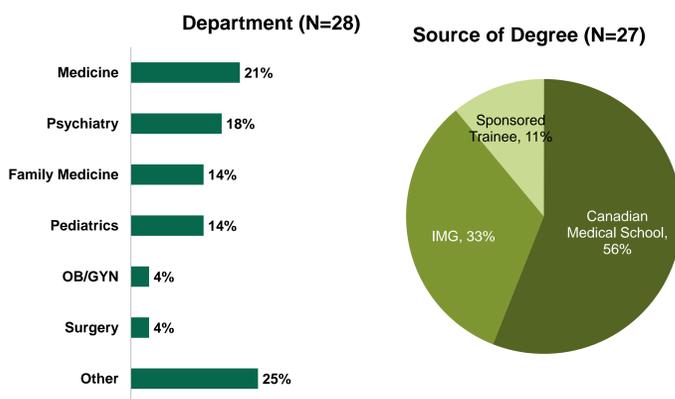
"I hope to learn practical ways of handling stress."

"(I hope to gain) some coping strategies for when feeling overwhelmed or anxious about balancing work/personal obligations."

ATTITUDES, SKILLS, CONFIDENCE

For each of the following statements, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree	Average (Mean)
Learning to care for myself is important for success in my medical career.	4.68
I feel I do a good job of balancing my personal and professional priorities during my residency.	2.82
I believe I will be able to maintain a healthy work life balance when I am in practice.	3.29
I am usually able to manage the stress of my clinical work.	2.96
I feel I have a good sense of knowing when my stress is not manageable.	3.36
The stress management strategies I turn to now are generally effective in helping me cope	3.21
I am concerned that the way I manage stress at present will not be sustainable.	3.50
I have little control over the things that cause me stress.	3.25
I feel sometimes I am the only resident who struggles.	2.79

MY UNDERGRAD/POSTGRAD MEDICAL TRAINING HAS INCLUDED ADEQUATE EDUCATION IN PHYSICIAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS TO PREPARE ME FOR A CAREER IN MEDICINE.



- The majority of attendees do not feel their training has included adequate education in physician health and wellness (Undergrad 56%, Postgrad 52%)

- Participants were asked to rate their attitudes, skills and confidence in stress management in the pre and post workshop questionnaires. There were no statistically significant differences from the pre to the post questionnaires. We were unable to analyze responses to the 4 months post workshop questionnaires due to low response.
- While there was strong agreement that good self care skills were essential for a successful medical career (M=4.68), the mean of those who feel they presently balance their personal and professional lives and of those who say they are usually able to manage the stress of their clinical work, are quite low (M=2.82 and 2.96 respectively) and over one-third (39%) do not feel they would be able to maintain a healthy work life balance when in practice.

LEARNING

- More attendees and evaluations are needed to evaluate effectiveness of intervention.
- Attendance at workshops that are outside of dedicated program academic time, requiring time away from clinical duties are variable. This was confirmed in the Program Director survey where 48% supported a 90-120 minute workshop, and 35% a 60 minute seminar in protected teaching time as the most efficient way to reach residents with this material, in comparison to 9% in time offered outside dedicated curricular hours.