



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official: Associate Dean for GME, DIO
Responsible Office: SMHS Office of GME
Most recent revision: September 2022

RESIDENT & FELLOW WELLNESS POLICY & RESOURCES

Policy Statement

In the current health care environment, residents, fellows and faculty members are at increased risk for burnout and depression. Psychological, emotional, and physical wellbeing are critical to the development and maintenance of the competent, caring, and resilient physician. Self-care is an important component of professionalism and high quality patient care; it is also a skill that must be learned and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training. This policy outlines the responsibility of the Office of Graduate Medical Education and GW Residency/Fellowship Programs to address wellness among residents and faculty members at GW.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

This policy applies to all residents and fellows who participate in an ACGME-accredited post graduate medical education (GME) training program sponsored by the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS).

Policy Contact

Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, DIO

Who Approved This Policy

Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC)

History/Revision Dates

Effective Date: August 30, 2017

Reviewed and Approved by GMEC: October 16, 2017

Revised, Reviewed and Approved by GMEC: July 15, 2019

Revised, Reviewed and Approved by GMEC: September 19, 2022

Policy

GME Responsibilities

- Assist program directors (PDs) in their initiatives to protect trainee time with patients, minimize non-physician obligations, provide administrative support to trainees, promote progressive autonomy and enhance professional relationships.
- Assist PDs with creating schedules that enhance resident well-being
- Evaluate workplace safety data and address the safety of residents and faculty members.
- Provide PDs with resources to educate faculty and trainees about the symptoms of burnout, depression and substance use and their avoidance.
- Identify resources for trainee burnout, depression and substance use.
- Encourage trainees and faculty members to alert designated personnel when they are concerned about a community member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance use, suicidal ideation or potential for violence, or who is not proactively engaging in self-care.
- Provide access to appropriate tools for self-screening for depression and burnout
- Provide access to confidential, affordable, mental health assessment including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Ensure that programs have sufficient back-up plans to provide patient care in the event that a trainee is unable to perform their patient care responsibilities including, but not limited to, fatigue, illness family emergencies and parental leave.
- Provide adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who are too fatigued to drive home safely.
- Provide a way for residents to report unprofessional behavior and a respectful process for reporting, investigating and addressing such concerns.
- Work with the GW Wellness Advisory Board to promote well-being among all members of the GW healthcare and health sciences community.

Program Responsibilities

In addition to working with the Institution on the initiatives described above, Programs are responsible for:

- Paying attention to trainee schedules to look at work intensity and compression factors.
- Allowing trainees to attend medical, dental and mental health care appointments, including those scheduled during work hours.
- Educating trainees and faculty about fatigue, fatigue mitigation, burnout, depression and substance use, and their avoidance.
- Teaching and nurturing self-care practices, an important component of professionalism and high-quality patient care.
- Providing a respectful, professional and civil environment that is free from mistreatment, abuse or coercion. There should be education in place about professional behavior and a confidential process for reporting concerns.
- Having policies in place to ensure coverage of patient care when a resident is unable to attend work.

Resident & Fellow Responsibilities

Learning self-care is an important component of professionalism and patient care, and trainees have a responsibility to themselves and to their patients and programs to ensure that they are fit for work through behaviors such as:

- Proactive self-care, and modeling of healthy lifestyles and behaviors for patients, students, and colleagues.
- Time management surrounding clinical assignments
- Impairment recognition and notification, either from illness, fatigue and substance use in themselves, their peers and other members of the health care team
- Lifelong learning
- Performance improvement indicator monitoring
- Reporting duty hours, patient outcomes and clinical experience (such as case logs)

Resources

GW Resiliency & Well Being Center:

<https://rwc.smhs.gwu.edu>

HR Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

<https://rwc.smhs.gwu.edu/smhs-mfa-well-being-employee-assistance-programs>

24 hours / 7 days a week / 365 days resources from SMHS and GWU HR:

Talkspace

<https://talkspace.com/gwu>

Resources for living

<https://hr.gwu.edu/eap>