



THE WHALE WATCH

"Looking Out for Yourself and Others"

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Special Edition #5



Lean on Me

Working and studying in medical professional school can be extremely challenging.

At times, even with loved ones closest to you, it can feel like no one fully understands the effort and dedicated time it takes to study for the usual course work let alone for major professional licensure exams.

This issue is meant to address ways in which you can learn to seek support for yourself, communicate to others how they can best support you, and how you can support fellow students.

In This Issue:

Finding Support For Yourself

How Others Can Support You

Finding Support for Yourself

Support from Your Peers: Talking with your peers can be normalizing and helpful, knowing that you are not alone in your experience. However, you will want to seek support from those who are going to lift you up not pull you down into negative feelings. Talking to another peer who is a year or more ahead of you, can also to help provide a more realistic perspective of what to expect and how to prepare for each academic gauntlet.

Support from Counseling: Our counseling team with the Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services (CSWCS) is here to help you even if it is just for one or a few sessions. Talking with a counselor can be REALLY cathartic especially with someone who is not a friend or family member. Talking with a counselor can also give you an opportunity to sift through complex or confusing feelings with someone and learn the tools to manage them in a healthy way.

Support from Religion/Spiritual Community: Seeking support and guidance from your preferred religious/spiritual community has been found to provide significant benefits to one's mental and emotional well-being.

Mindfulness Support: Mindfulness practices such as deep breathing, prayer, meditation, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery can provide respite from the daily grind.

Support from the Arts : Engaging in an art project, playing an instrument, singing, listening to music, or creative writing, poetry or journaling can all provide an important outlet for self-expression.

Support from Nature: Heading outdoors, going for a walk/hike, or being close to nature can really help to make you feel connected to your environment.



How Others Can Support You

Let's face it, we cannot read each other's minds even if there are times we really want someone to know how we feel! The best way you can let others know what you need is for you to be very open and direct about what forms of support are most helpful to you.

You may have to guide a friend/family member to be a good 'listener' instead of a 'problem solver' at times.

You may also have to let them know when you need your space and quietness and when you would like to have downtime or socialize. Sometimes friends/family may support you in ways that they think are best, while they may have good intentions, it may not align with what you need.

In those cases, ***be sure to communicate with them and really identify what you need and what are the most helpful forms of support.***



How to Support Others

Peers really value the input they receive from other peers versus those who are outside the circle of professional school.

If you notice a fellow student is acting depressed or anxious, withdrawn, lethargic or tired, is eating too little or too much, displaying low motivation, exhibiting high risk impulsive behaviors, or making statements regarding threats to self-harm, encourage them to seek counseling support.

If you continue to check in on them and they are not improving and they do not follow through with seeking help, you can reach out to the CARE Team to report your concerns.

Visit our CSWCS webpage for more information on how to help a fellow student.



Check out these Web Resources

[USMLE Step 1: The Stigma around Self-Care and Wellness](#)

[Med school insiders self-care during step 1 - YouTube](#)

[5 Steps to Maintaining Sanity in Social Distancing - YouTube](#)

[Welcome to a Safe Space. | Vibrant Emotional Health: Vibrant Emotional Health](#)

[5 Sources of Support, Right in Front of You](#)

We Are Here For You!

**The Center for Student Wellness and
Counseling Services**

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