

Change Your Mindset to Support Your Well-being



Family physician Dike Drummond, MD, CEO of TheHappyMD.com, points out that physicians are conditioned during traditional medical education, residency training, and medical practice to ignore their own physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Certain mindsets and behaviors that are useful—or even required—to meet the demands of medical school and residency can become deeply ingrained by the time you enter practice, and you may not even be conscious of them.

Drummond says mindsets and behaviors that lead to professional success can also result in work overload, stress, and isolation. When you become aware of these deep-seated mindsets and how they affect your work and personal life, you can counter them by finding ways to support your well-being. This shift will also benefit your loved ones, your practice team, and your patients.

Integrate gratitude at work and home.

Create a “Wall of Gratitude” at work and encourage team members to post anything they are grateful for throughout the week. At home, start and end each day by reflecting on one thing you are grateful for. Write it down, or tell someone about it.

Make time for mindfulness.

Throughout the day, take a mindful minute—or even just several seconds—to pause, breathe, and reset. Do this when you arrive at work, before each patient visit or team meeting, and when you leave the office.

Create opportunities to meaningfully connect.

Make a point to get to know your colleagues better. For example, instead of eating lunch at your desk, or skipping it altogether, invite a team member to eat his or her lunch with you. Aim to do this at least once a week.



Be part of the team.

Commit to participating in team functions, or even initiating them, if possible. Encourage your team to gather for a quick huddle at the end of each day or week to share personal updates and challenging patient experiences, and to celebrate each other's successes.

Find a mentor.

Identify a trusted colleague within or outside of your practice and ask him or her to be your mentor. A mentor can be a valuable sounding board when you face challenges in your practice, and provide guidance to help you develop your leadership skills and maintain your well-being.

Evaluate your well-being.

Nearly four in 10 AAFP members (38%) report having at least one symptom of burnout, so it's important to determine where you are on the well-being continuum. Taking the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) routinely will keep you attuned to the current state of your well-being so you can identify useful professional and personal resources.

Resources:

1 [American Medical Association \(AMA\) STEPS Forward™, Creating Strong Team Culture module](#)

2 [Maslach Burnout Inventory](#)