From the Counselor’s Desk

**Oh gratitude, where have you gone?**

I can’t be grateful right now. What a realization. I decided a few weeks ago this was going to be the topic for the holiday’s newsletter. I tried to look up some inspired writing, but I promised myself, and secretly all of you, I would never write anything here that I don’t experience or practice personally. I simply won’t perpetuate lies or illusions that sound beautiful on paper but unrealistic to adopt. Since, I have been trying to feel that deep sense of gratitude to no avail, even though I KNOW all the things that SHOULD make me feel thankful. But connecting to that feeling, that’s a whole other story. I started reading, looking, being curious, trying… One quote keeps showing up:

“It’s not happiness that brings us gratitude. It’s gratitude that brings us happiness.”

I am not sure who said it first. Some attribute it to Brother David Steindl-Rast. Independently, the deep truth within the quote makes it immensely powerful. I’ve been busy, stressed, and sick for the past few days. Happiness is not the emotion that has shown up more often for me. And I have been waiting for it to feel grateful.

So, I get to work on an inner search. Feel the gratitude first! I repeat to myself. And I started feeling it. It wasn’t a fire that burn through my soul. It was closer in intensity and duration to the flick of a match. I had to get very concrete, no big concepts or virtues of human existence. I had to start with simple, everyday occurrences; my dog licking my leg; my daughter willing to share a tiny piece of chocolate, so small it made us laugh; the nutcracker figurine I bought years ago because it resembles my ex mother-in-law; my son cooking with me; the wind in Corpus Christi, members of our Med Spouses and Significant Others support group. I was determined and intentional, and the match lit up a little fire.

I still feel stressed, or maybe is more homesick, around the holidays; I am not 100% healed, and I continue to be busy. But now I can be thankful at least a few minutes a day. It makes a huge difference.

I wish this Holiday season you find the spark of gratitude; may it light the fire of joy… even if only a little one.

--Adriana

**Consultant Contact Information:**
Adriana Dyurich, PhD, dyurich@uthscsa.edu
About Our Featured Program

Pediatrics was the first program we featured in our newsletter. We wondered if it would be OK to feature them again. Then we decided to give credit when credit is due. This time around we are sharing with you their very specific (and doable) wellness plan. Some of it has already inspired other Programs to action. We think you will enjoy it!

UT Health Pediatric Residency Wellness Committee

The Pediatric Resident Wellness Committee is entering its third year of providing access to training, tools and resources to assist individuals in need, as well as to create an environment of support, empowerment and reflection. The committee has become stronger in its ability to execute usable and meaningful outlets for wellness focusing on one or more dimension of wellness to include emotional, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual and environmental.

This committee highlights our program’s commitment to creating a positive change in the clinical and academic learning environments through shared human experiences, wellness resources and skills. Trainee involvement in the culture change of our profession is pivotal and ensures the current and next generation of healthcare providers are prepared to deal with the increasing stress of the healthcare system.

The committee has made huge strides to creating a truly well culture inside of Pediatrics as seen by the offerings listed below:

- **2 x per year: Doctor days** – protected time for our trainees to go to the dentist and PCP
- **5 x per year: Didactics** – we conduct a needs assessment each year to determine lecture content and requested activities
- **2 x per year: Wellness Theme Weeks** to engage and support the collaboration of interprofessional teams; residents, students, faculty and nurses
- **1 x per year: DeStress Fest** (games, music, hand massage, therapy dogs, no didactic just open discussion)

- **Protected Wellness Appointments**
  - This year one of our goals was to offer Wellness Check-in appointments with a Licensed Therapist. The committee decided to utilize the wonderful GME resource, Dr. Liza Maldonado, Psy.D. Behavioral Health Consultant for 30-minute meetings during each protected wellness day. These meetings are first come first serve, use a Google form to sign up, are VOLUNTARY, and are used to help residents process, chat or create wellness goals as they are not considered documented therapy appointments.

- **Sharing Information**: Giving lectures on and off campus for multiple specialties offering advice and support for the development of such a committee.
- **Wellness Champions and Burnout Buddies** designated in each class
• Formal wellness curriculum on Canvas offering activities and resources (under construction)
• Wellness Sprinkles (highlighting 1 slide for birthdays/babies/congrats, 1 slide for grief and memorial, 1 slide with scholarly deadlines) every Friday
• Resident Houses – advocacy points
• Wellness resource board in resident study room

• Letter to self and resident led reflection on profession – annually at orientation
• Monthly birthday recognition from PC’s
• Code Lavender & Greif Training

  Remembrance Board – during grief and code lavender training residents work together on openly discussing grief and then create remembrance cards for those patients that have left a lasting impact (picture omitted for containing real patients’ names)

• Positive feedback collages posted in the resident work room

  Positive Feedback Board – Each resident has their photo on fun paper and they are taken to all wellness didactics for peers to write encouraging comments then placed on the wall in the resident workroom

• LGBTQA+ Safe Space Training
• Cultural Competency training beginning with holidays around the world
• Wellness Policy for department

Highlight Your Program!

We would love to highlight the wellness activities your program is doing in our quarterly newsletter. Please send your request to: dyurich@uthscsa.edu
What do I do for Wellness…
What our faculty members REALLY do to stay well

Dr. Jon Courand MD, FAAP
Professor and Vice Chair for Education and Training in Pediatrics
Assistant Dean of Wellness Programs for GME

I look at wellness not as “things I do” but more a way of being. To that end I try each day to practice my mindfulness techniques, I do a long walk or run each week and try to commit to 20 minutes per day of focused meditation. Spending time with my wife attending our daughters band and orchestra concerts, trips to our ranch in far West Texas to hike and climb and an occasional dinner in a nice restaurant rounds it out. One day I will get back to painting and writing.

GME Resident Wellness Services

Residency and fellowship training is one of the most exciting times in life, but it also can present a variety of challenges to personal and professional well-being. Being a physician in training can be challenging. It is difficult to juggle long work hours, caring for your patients, and the pressure to excel within your program, while trying to maintain a balanced and fulfilling personal life. Stress, if not addressed adequately, can lead to an array of issues, including burnout, that might interfere with caring for your patients, your family and friends, and yourself.

We are here to be your safe haven. Our services are completely confidential. Counseling records are maintained in files separate from the resident files, and cannot be accessed by faculty, staff, administrators, or other residents without the individual’s written permission. There is no need to diagnose or bill your insurance. All individuals are treated with respect, regardless of age, color, ethnicity, gender, marital/parental status, national origin, race, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or counseling concern.

Our resident wellness program strives to ensure that residents are both emotionally and academically successful. Our goal is to promote work-life balance and overall wellness by advocating for you and providing you with tools to reduce burnout, depression, relationship stress, and other problems.

Through the GME Wellness Services you can take advantage of:
- Confidential and private counseling in person or via phone
- Online self-screening for depression, burnout, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. The screening is voluntary and completely anonymous. Visit www.uthealth.caresforyou.org to take the assessment
- Wellness presentations and guidance on how to implement wellness curriculum in your program
- **Neuro-psychological screening at no cost (new)**

Contact us if you are experiencing:
- Need to improve your overall emotional wellness
- Symptoms of depression, anxiety, other mental health concerns
- Burnout, imposter syndrome, career doubts, job stress
- Lack of work-life balance
- Love loss and other relationship problems
- Anger / Stress
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- Substance abuse
- Sleep disturbance
- Perfectionism
- Adverse event (needle stick, traumatic patient outcome, illness in your family, etc.)
- Harassment by a partner or work colleague
- Conflicts with faculty, attendings, hospital staff
- Issues related to test taking, time management, and...
other academic challenges

To help you function at your very best, we can refer you for free to **Psychiatric Services**.

**Cost & Hours**
All services are free to residents and fellows. Our main hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm. Knowing you are busy, we will make our best effort to accommodate to your schedule.

**Location**
We are located in the basement of the Academic Learning & Teaching Center (ALTC B-109). Our offices are private to preserve confidentiality. Please call or email for directions.

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**Contact Information for Consultants**
To schedule a counseling appointment or find out about our Wellness Services, please contact:  
[gmewellness@uthscsa.edu](mailto:gmewellness@uthscsa.edu)

or

Dr. Dyurich at [dyurich@uthscsa.edu](mailto:dyurich@uthscsa.edu) - **210-450-8734**  
Dr. Maldonado at [maldonadol3@uthscsa.edu](mailto:maldonadol3@uthscsa.edu) - **210-450-8341**.

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**Connection & Support Group for Spouses and SOs**
The GME Wellness Team and the House Staff Council extend a warm invitation to your spouses and significant others to join us for our **Connection & Support Group**.

**Meetings will be held on the 3rd Monday of every month from 6:30pm – 7:30pm**  
NEXT meeting Dec. 16th –  
Please email Dr. Dyurich to RSVP ([dyurich@uthscsa.edu](mailto:dyurich@uthscsa.edu))

This time we'll meet at **Fahrenheit 32 SA** to celebrate our last meeting of 2019!
Wellness Activities Around Town

San Antonio Parks and Recreation
Explore the Fun
Year round

https://www.sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Home

Holly Daze Rock - Music Performances
Location: Arneson River Theater, 418 Villita St.
Dec 13- 6:30pm and 14- 1:30pm

Join the Take Note Youth Band as they perform Rock and seasonal favorites to get everyone in the spirit of the holidays at the Arneson River Theater in downtown in San Antonio.

The River Foundation’s ambitious projects range from creating unprecedented opportunities for education, recreation and interaction with nature along the river to initiating, funding and installing exciting urban art projects by renowned regional, national, and international artists.

THE PEOPLE’S CLINIC
Dec 20. 1pm – 5pm
Location: Estela Avery Education Center
310 W Mitchell St, San Antonio, TX 78204
Cost: Free

Presented by Yanawana Herbolarios, the People’s Clinic is a free monthly mobile clinic featuring a botanical pharmacy and holistic integrative healthcare with access to a variety of healthcare practitioners.

More information is at https://www.yanawanaherbolarios.org/our-work/what-we-do/health-wellness/.

FREE HIERBA HEALTHCARE CLINIC 6PM
San Antonio Museum of Art
See calendar for dates and times
200 West Jones Ave., 78215
Free Admission with UTHSA ID badge
https://www.samuseum.org/

The San Antonio Museum of Art is an art museum in Downtown San Antonio, Texas, USA. With a collection spanning 5,000 years of global culture, SAMA is the only encyclopedic museum of fine art in South Texas.

Reagan High School Choir Performance
Dec 20, 6:30 PM–7:30 PM
Ticket Price: Free

Enjoy a performance from this award-winning choir, which placed first in the University and Youth Choirs at the 2019 Leonardo da Vinci Choral Festival in Florence, Italy.

**All residents, fellows, students, faculty and staff of the Long School of Medicine have free admission to SAMA, with UTHSA ID badge!**

Pearl Brewery
303 Pearl Pkwy, San Antonio, TX 78215
https://atpearl.com/

PEARL HOLIDAY NIGHT MARKETS
December 5th, 12th, and 19th 4 PM–8 PM

Get a jump start on holiday shopping with The Historic Pearl's Holiday Night Market! Join us Thursdays in December to shop farmers market vendors and artisan vendors while enjoying live music. Seasonal favorites like tamales, artisanal chocolates and sweets will also be available! PLUS all of Pearl's retail tenants will be staying open until 3 7 p.m. during the markets.
More information is at
https://www.facebook.com/events/1174156416306161/

Art to Lunch
Dec 19, 12:30 PM–1 PM
Ticket Price: $10.00
Ticket Price Members: Free

Take a bite out of your lunch hour with a two-object tour. Bring your own lunch or treat yourself to a meal at Tre Trattoria.

The longest, coldest night of the year is approaching, but dawn always breaks again. This gallery talk will examine how various cultures