

Resident Wellness Guideline

Source: Department of Family and Community Medicine

Purpose

Resident wellness is a key priority at the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Postgraduate Medical Education (DFCM, PGME). Our aim is to provide a supportive learning environment to help promote resident mental, physical and emotional health, and accommodate wellness needs whenever possible.

This policy is intended to:

- Promote a healthy learning environment that optimizes wellbeing at DFCM PGME sites
- Provide an overview of general roles and responsibilities of programs, faculty and trainees
- Identify and summarize key resources available to residents to support their health and wellbeing

Please also refer to the Wellness Guidelines for Postgraduate Trainees, PGME, University of Toronto. https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/pg-wellness-guidelinesnov2019pgmeacfinal_0.pdf

Background

Being a physician and training in Family Medicine is very rewarding. However, it can also be associated with significant challenges. Family medicine trainees often work in a milieu of clinical uncertainty, are exposed to emotionally difficult clinical cases, bear significant patient care responsibilities, work long and irregular hours, manage excessive EMR demands and experience exam-, financial-, family- and career-related stress. These and other factors can contribute to poor physician health and fatigue.

Fatigue is a known occupational risk of residency and can be characterized by physical and psychological tiredness that can directly impact provider and patient care (FRM Toolkit, 2018). Specifically, fatigue can have effects on cognition and lead to increased irritability, lower levels of empathy, and patient or occupational safety events.

Program, Faculty and Trainee Responsibilities

The DFCM PGME is committed to fostering a culture that promotes, and is responsive to, the health needs of our trainees. As also detailed in the Wellness Guidelines for Postgraduate Trainees, PGME U of T, trainees, faculty and programs share responsibility for optimizing wellness:

- Program and Faculty Responsibilities: Be cognizant of factors that may affect resident wellness; take steps to ensure the safety of learners and patients when health or fatigue may be affecting a trainee; at no time deny a visit for acute care; provide accommodation when warranted and as guided by appropriate medical direction; provide a safe environment that enables students to comfortably express concerns about wellness and to report fatigue-related incidents with no consequence to the resident.
 - Site Directors and Clinical Preceptors/supervisors have a particularly important role in ensuring a safe, collegial and open work environment, absolutely free from intimidation and harassment, and in which residents are able to freely communicate their wellness needs.
- Resident Responsibilities: Report fit for duty; manage time to prevent significant fatigue; seek appropriate help when health or wellness concerns are identified.

- Residents are strongly encouraged to support their peers and assist colleagues who are experiencing difficulty to seek help. Residents concerned about the safety of a fellow trainee, or in turn safety of patients, should report their concerns to their Site Director or a faculty member.

Programs, faculty and residents are encouraged to adopt an upstream approach to maintaining wellness, whereby attending to self-care and addressing wellness needs are promoted and optimized at all stages of training, and at all training sites.

Fatigue Risk Management

Fatigue is a known occupational risk in postgraduate training, including family medicine training. Fatigue can affect any trainee and its successful management is the shared responsibility of all those involved in postgraduate medical education (FRM Toolkit, 2018). To help foster a just and responsive learning environment, family medicine postgraduate trainees and faculty should have an appreciation for the importance of Fatigue Risk Management, including the effects of fatigue and effective practices. A comprehensive approach to fatigue risk management for postgraduate trainees at the University of Toronto can be found in the Wellness Guidelines for Postgraduate Trainees, PGME U of T (https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/pg-wellness-guidelinesnov2019pgmeacfinal_0.pdf)

FOR CENTRAL DFCM/ FAMILY MEDICINE TEACHING UNITS

The DFCM PGME has a Wellness Representative who attends central Postgraduate Wellness Committee meetings. This Wellness Representative reports on relevant wellness issues to the DFCM RPC to ensure the application and sharing of wellness-related PGME policies within the DFCM. A key responsibility for individual FMTUs and Site Directors is to ensure that residents are made aware of the wellness resources described herein. As such, all sites are responsible for reviewing wellness resources during resident orientations and periodically, or as needed, throughout training.

Trainee wellness and intimidation and harassment concerns are explicitly reviewed at 6-month Progress Reviews with Site Directors and Annual Program Director Site Visits. Similarly, at Progress Reviews, Site Directors inquire about any concerns related to the hidden curriculum and review a related resident reflective piece.

Residents are also assigned a faculty advisor/primary preceptor for the duration (or for each year) of their training to help foster a supportive and comfortable environment. As noted, residents are encouraged to practice self-care and address wellness needs throughout their training. Specific resident wellness initiatives, such as workshops, Balint support groups, mindfulness sessions and retreats are delivered on a site by site basis. In addition, many sites have designated a faculty and/or resident wellness representative to support these initiatives on an ongoing basis.

FOR RESIDENTS

If you are experiencing a health or wellness concern, there are many supports available to you.

If you have an emergent Health Concern...

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call 911 right away or go to the nearest emergency department.

PARO provides a 24-Hour Help Line: 1- 866-HELP-DOC (1-866-435-7362) *There is a direct link to this contact on the DFCM Learner Assistance.

If you have a non-emergent Health Concern...

You are always encouraged to approach your Site Director, Faculty Advisor, Clinical Preceptor and/or faculty Wellness Representative to assist you in navigating your health or wellness concern(s). This includes concerns related to fatigue-risk management and reporting fatigue-related incidents.

Similarly, the Office of Learner Affairs offers residents a range of confidential services, including support through academic difficulty, career guidance, and advising about leaves, transfers, intimidation/harassment and disability & accommodation support, in addition to providing short term counselling and helping to navigate health care resources.

The Learner Assistance, available on the DFCM website, is an anonymous link that provides rapid access to resources and support for a variety of crisis situations for your review, including: “I am experiencing a personal crisis”, “I’ve been exposed to blood or body fluids”, “I am concerned about my safety ...”, “I am worried about my performance on FM Map test”, “There has been a death in my family” and more.

Finally, the OMA Physician Health Program provides confidential services to medical students and physicians who have concerns relating to stress, burnout, mental health and substance abuse. They offer triage, expedited referral, management and monitoring.

Personal Safety

For policy and guidelines related to personal safety, including (but not limited to): Safe travel, working in isolated situations, using hazardous materials and blood borne pathogens, please consult the “Resident Safety Guidelines” located under “modules” at <http://q.utoronto.ca/> using your UTorID and password, or visit the Learner Assistance.

Intimidation and Harassment

For concerns related to Intimidation and Harassment, you are always encouraged to approach your Site Director, Faculty Advisor, Clinical Preceptor, faculty Wellness Representative or the PGME Office of Learner Mistreatment (<https://meded.temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/learner-mistreatment>) to assist you in navigating your concerns. Please consult the Learner Mistreatment Guideline <https://meded.temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/learnermistreatmentguideline> for further information or at the Learner Assistance <https://dfcm.utoronto.ca/dfcm-learner-assistance>.

Disability and Accommodation

“Residents with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities and benefits as those without disabilities. In some circumstances, those with disabilities may require short or long-term accommodation to enable them to complete their training” (“Accommodation, PGME Statement of General Principles” found at: (<https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/accommodation-guideline-document-pgmeac2024.pdf>)). Also see this guideline for more information regarding the **Board of Medical Assessors**.

The DFCM, as per the PGME Accommodation Policy, (<https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/accommodation-guideline-document-pgmeac2024.pdf>) is committed to doing their utmost to facilitate reasonable adjustments to the learning and working environment, to the point of undue hardship, to permit trainees with disabilities to have equitable opportunities to succeed while still achieving the core competencies of the program. As part of this commitment to both foster an equitable work environment while ensuring sufficient clinical exposure for our learners, time-based accommodations may result in an extension to the program. A full-time program in DFCM is considered the equivalent of 11 half days per week (or 44 half days per block).

Learners requiring accommodations to the learning and work environment must connect with the Office of Learner Affairs.

Paid and Unpaid Leaves (see also: “Guidelines for Residency Leaves of Absence at: <https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/pgme-leaves-guidelinesfinal-pgmeac2024.pdf>)

Paid, includes:

- Pregnancy and Parental Leave: Entitlement to pregnancy and parental leave is addressed in Section 15 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement.
<https://myparo.ca/your-contract/#pregnancy-and-parental-leave>
<https://www.myparo.ca/pregnancy-parental-leave/>
- Medical/Sick Leave: Residents are entitled to 6 months of paid sick leave. Further details on Long Term Disability and other entitlements regarding illness or injury are addressed in Section 14 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement.
- Emergency, Family, Bereavement Leave: A resident may request a leave due to a death in the immediate family or a person with whom the resident had a close relationship. A leave may also be requested due to family illness, injury, medical emergency, or other urgent family matters to which the resident must attend. Five consecutive working days may be granted by the Program Director for this paid leave. This guideline should be interpreted with proper sensitivity.
- Vacation (4 weeks) & Professional Days (7 days) per year. See guideline for details.

Unpaid, includes:

- Personal/Compassionate Leave: A resident may request an unpaid leave of absence due to a personal situation or career uncertainty. These leaves will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with the Program Director.

RESOURCES

Please see below for wellness resources and contacts:

University	Website Link:
Office of Resident Wellness, University of Toronto, Postgraduate Medical Education, 416-946-3074	https://meded.temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/wellness-programs
Learner Mistreatment, University of Toronto, Postgraduate Medical Education, 416-978-6976	https://meded.temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/learner-mistreatment
PGME Accommodations for Postgraduate Trainees with a Disability, ola.reception@utoronto.ca , 416-978-2764	https://pgme.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/assets/db-resource/document/accommodation-guideline-document-pgmeac2024.pdf
Other Resources Available	
PARO 24 Hour Help Line, 866-HELP-DOC 1-866-435-7362	http://www.myparo.ca/helpline/ http://www.myparo.ca/during-residency/
OMA Physician Health Program, 800-851-6606	http://php.oma.org/
General Practitioner Psychotherapy Network of Toronto	https://www.mdpc.ca/
Your local Hospital Occupational Health Department	

Career Planning

Resources	
PARO Transition to Practice Program	http://www.myparo.ca/after-residency/
Health Force Ontario Practice U	http://www.healthforceontario.ca/Jobs/MarketingandRecruitment
Ontario Physicians Locum Program	http://www.healthforceontario.ca/Jobs/OntarioPhysicianLocumPrograms.aspx
University of Toronto Career Centre	http://www.careers.utoronto.ca/

Reference:

FRM Toolkit, 2018 <https://residentdoctors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Fatigue-Risk-Management-ToolkitEN.pdf>