



The Library as a Partner in Wellness: A Curated Resource Collection for Medical Students

David Stewart, MLIS¹

¹Assistant Professor, Medical Library, Department of Foundational Medical Studies, Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine

Introduction

Medical education involves intense stress; 82% of students experience high distress, facing higher rates of burnout and mental illness than the general population^{2,3}. This is often attributed to a medical culture prioritizing technical efficiency over humanistic care¹. Medical libraries are uniquely positioned to bridge this gap, as students perceive them as safe, confidential communal spaces². Despite this, only 18% of U.S. medical libraries currently offer dedicated wellness resources². To address this, Narrative Medicine, the engagement with patient stories, has emerged as one way to foster narrative competence¹. These interventions improve clinical connections and self-perspective, helping students navigate the hidden curriculum that often encourages emotional detachment¹. This initiative moves wellness from a hidden value to a formally supported competency.

Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of this program is to support student well-being and mitigate compassion fatigue, burnout, or depression by creating a centralized, low-barrier resource collection. This innovation aims to:

- increase student access to curated tools for self-care and resilience,
- formalize wellness support within the medical library ecosystem, and
- reinforce the OUWB value of compassion by equipping future physicians with the resources to care for themselves, thereby preserving their ability to care for others.

Approach/Process

The Medical Library has developed The Wellness & Compassion Resource Collection. The process involved:

- Collaboration with the OUWB Office of Student Affairs to identify resource gaps.
- Curation of a specialized collection, including evidence-based literature on burnout, mindfulness, and narrative medicine, as well as memoirs and podcasts as part of a comprehensive LibGuide to provide 24/7 digital access.
- Creation of a corresponding physical collection prominently displayed in the library to normalize and promote the use of these resources.

Wellness & Compassion Resource Collection: Home

A collection of resources to support student well-being.

Home

OUWB & Community Support

Managing Stress & Burnout

Compassion & Empathy

Mindfulness & Self-Care

Narrative Medicine & Humanities

Suggest a Resource

Advancing Equity

Wellness & Compassion Resource Collection

Why your well-being matters

OUWB's value of creating compassionate physicians is core to the school's mission, and we at the library want to support that mission by helping our students care for themselves. How can future physicians provide compassion care for their patients if they lack the tools to properly care for themselves?

What can this guide do for you?

What can you find in this equity guide?

- A collection of resources to help you take care of yourself as you make your way through medical school
- Links to other guides and hubs where you can find additional information
- Resources located on Oakland University's campus you may not be aware of
- Support groups and conversations about well-being and compassion

This guide is a curated collection of resources to support your well-being. "Wellness and Compassion" isn't just a theme; it's a practice. We're here to help you build resilience, find balance, and sustain your capacity for compassion - both for your patients and for yourself. This is a safe space to find resources.

OUWB & Community Support

Wellness resources located on and around Oakland University's Campus and the local community.

Managing Stress & Burnout

Resources specific to handling stress, avoiding burnout, and seeking help.

Compassion & Empathy

Resources and media dedicated to showcasing physician empathy and compassion for patients.

Mindfulness & Self-Care

Resources like guided breathing exercises and meditation tutorials to help students decompress.

Narrative Medicine & Humanities

Resources and examples of how narrative medicine is used in medical education and clinical practice.

Evaluation Plan

Program success will be evaluated through a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data will include monthly tracking of LibGuide page views and clicks on specific resources. Qualitative data will be gathered via a brief, voluntary feedback survey embedded in the LibGuide to assess the perceived utility and impact of the resources. We will also monitor usage statistics for the physical collection. These metrics will be used for continuous quality improvement.

Expected Results

The anticipated educational outcome is an increased student awareness and utilization of wellness and self-care resources. By embedding these tools directly into the academic environment, this program moves self-care from the hidden curriculum to a formally supported competency. This innovation provides students with a foundational toolkit for building resilience, aiming to reduce burnout and sustain their capacity for compassionate patient care throughout their training and careers.

Discussion

A significant challenge in wellness programming is emotional resistance; some students perceive narrative exercises as contrived or they feel like spectators when exploring patient stories¹. To address this, interventions must utilize adaptable formats and supportive environments that prioritize authenticity and psychological safety¹. Additionally, students often cite time constraints and stigma as major barriers to seeking help². This project provides a solution by offering 24/7 digital access via LibGuides and physical library displays, placing support in a central communal space students already perceive as safe.

References

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