

Building resident resilience: Using mindfulness, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution-focused therapy to teach residents stress management skills

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One of the primary reasons that residents seek support from the Office of Resident Wellness at the University of Toronto is for stress and mental health related concerns. During our individual encounters with residents, many were able to identify that they were not coping well, but also that they did not feel sufficiently skilled in the active coping strategies required to sustain a career in medicine.

Evaluations of 2 half-day workshops piloted in 2009 to increase residents' awareness of their own attitudes and behaviors compromising optimal resilience to stress and teaching specific mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) skills to manage life challenges revealed that (1) residents had minimal exposure to this type of learning and skill development throughout their medical training, (2) they felt these were useful techniques that they could use to successfully manage stress and (3) they would benefit from further opportunities to develop these skills in more depth.

This presentation will highlight how we extended our programming in 2010 to offer 3 distinct skill-based workshops with interim follow-up groups for participating residents and evaluate the effect on their abilities to actively manage their stress as part of the Manager and Professional competencies.