

JeffMD's Wellness Thread: Lessons Learned

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Background

“Nearly half of U.S. medical students experience symptoms of burnout such as feeling emotionally exhausted, detached from patients, and that their efforts do not make a difference” –Dyrbye & Shanafelt 2011

Systems solutions must be pursued to promote wellness and reduce burnout. Per Shanafelt & Noseworthy 2017, when groups/organizations operate under the assumption that wellness and burnout are the sole responsibility of the individual, efforts to improve wellness are looked upon with skepticism by physicians and organizational factors are neglected. Individuals may pursue strategies to mitigate burnout that work for the individual, but not for the group/organization. Systems strategies for wellness might include optimizing the learning environment, social support and community, culture that reinforces shared professional values but also flexibility/autonomy along with equity/fairness.

Sidney Kimmel Medical College underwent a transformation from a primarily lecture based format to an integrated, longitudinal format that includes both time limited blocks and longitudinal threads of content. The wellness thread is conceptualized as both wellness of the provider and the patient. In addition to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education's mandates regarding the number of contact hours allowed, the structural presence of a wellness thread provides a reminder to curriculum developers to take into account student wellness.

Wellness Thread Design

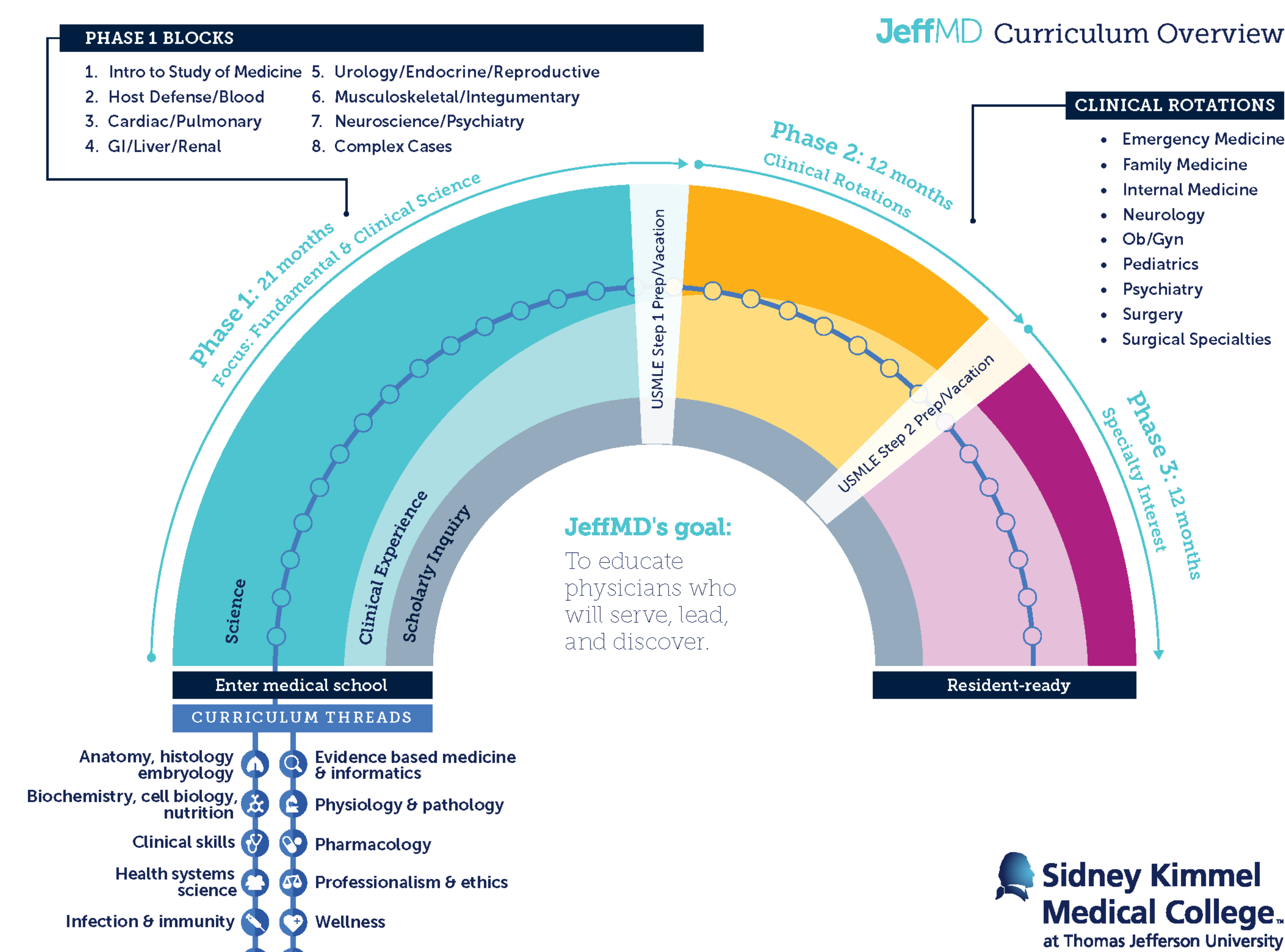
Content is provided through lecture and integrated into weekly case-based learning sessions. The most visible portion of the program is the provision of personal wellness content during an intersession week in the fall of the first year. It is an opportunity to provide students with a structured pause to reflect on their own wellness; explore ideas of resilience; provide time for rejuvenation, creation of social connections, and new habit conception.

Content included in the week included lectures on the science of learning and the science of wellbeing, cookie hours to meet their new small groups and to reflect with prior small groups, and selective workshops. Workshops included topics such as an interprofessional story slam, mindfulness, knitting, nutrition, writing, and music.

During the first year of implementation, 65% thought the week was effective. This increased to 92% the next academic year.

The week was designed and revised with input from the student wellness thread liaisons, student personal counseling center leaders, and director of humanities. Simplified scheduling that made free time readily apparent and adjustment of the content to increase emphasis on solutions rather than problem definition increased satisfaction.

Overview of JeffMD



Goals of Wellness Week

- Offer a structured pause in medical school for students to reflect on their own wellness
- Explore the ideas of resilience
- Provide time for rejuvenation and creating social connections
- Allow students to start building lifelong habits

Monday 10/29	Tuesday 10/30	Wednesday 10/31	Thursday 11/1
		9-12PM Science of Wellbeing	
11-12pm Cookie Hour			
		1-2: Cookie Hour	
2-3:30PM Science of Learning	10am-4pm Selectives		Day of Service
5-6:30PM Story Slam: Resilience in Healthcare			

Integration into Clinical Years

- Learn how to shift circadian rhythm for shift work. View the short online module via this QR code.
- Reflection with peers re: transformation occurring in clinical setting, and to process moral injury via Professionalism Thread
- Reflection through cartooning during the Family and Community Medicine Rotation



Medical students knitting with anatomy faculty

References

- Maslach C, Jackson SE. The measurement of experienced burnout. Journal of Organizational Behavior. April 1981.
- Shanafelt TD, Noseworthy JH. Executive Leadership and Physician Well-being: Nine Organizational Strategies to Promote Engagement and Reduce Burnout. Mayo Clinic Proceedings. January 2017.
- Dyrbye LN, Shanafelt TD. Commentary: Medical Student Distress: A Call to Action. Academic Medicine. Volume 86 (7), July 2011.