

Resident Wellness Policy

FATIGUE AND/OR STRESS

Symptoms of fatigue and/or stress are normal and expected to occur periodically with the Trainee population, just as it would in other professional settings. Not unexpectedly, Trainees may on occasion experience some effects of inadequate sleep and/or stress. As an institution, the Program has adopted the following policy to address Trainee fatigue and/or stress:

I. Recognition of Trainee Excess Fatigue and/or Stress

A. Signs and symptoms of Trainee fatigue and/or stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Inattentiveness to details
2. Forgetfulness
3. Emotional instability
4. Mood swings
5. Increased conflicts with others
6. Lack of attention to proper attire or hygiene
7. Difficulty completing tasks and difficulty with multitasking
8. Awareness of impaired regression to using rote memory

B. Response

1. The demonstration of Trainee excess fatigue and/or stress may occur in patient care settings or in non-patient care settings, such as lectures and conferences. In patient care settings, patient safety, as well as the personal safety and well-being of the Trainee, mandates implementation of an immediate and a proper response sequence. In non-patient care settings, responses may vary depending on the severity of and the demeanor of the Trainee's appearance, conduct, and condition. The following is intended as a general guideline for those recognizing or observing symptoms of excessive Trainee fatigue and/or stress in either setting.

C. Recognition of Excess Fatigue and/or Stress

1. Recognition by Attending Physician or Supervising Trainee
 - a. In the interest of patient and Trainee safety, the recognition that a Trainee is demonstrating evidence of excess fatigue and/or stress requires the attending physician or supervising Trainee to consider immediate release of the Trainee from any further patient care responsibilities at the time of recognition.
 - b. The attending physician or supervising Trainee should privately discuss his/her observations with the Trainee exhibiting symptoms of excessive fatigue and/or stress, attempt to identify the reason for excess fatigue and/or stress, and determine the proper remedy that will be required to alleviate the situation.
 - c. The attending physician must attempt, in all circumstances without exception, to notify the supervising Trainee on-call, Program Director or Department Chair if PD is unavailable, respectively, depending on the ability to contact one of these individuals, of the decision to release the Trainee from further patient care responsibilities at that time.
 - d. If excess fatigue is the issue, the attending physician must advise the Trainee to rest for a period that is adequate to relieve the fatigue before operating a motorized vehicle. This may mean that the Trainee should first go to the on-call room for a sleep interval no less than 30 minutes. The Trainee may also be advised to consider calling someone to provide transportation home.
 - e. If stress is the issue, the attending physician, upon privately counseling the Trainee, may opt to take immediate action to alleviate the stress. If, in the opinion of the attending physician, the Trainee's stress has the potential to negatively affect patient safety, the attending physician must immediately release the

Trainee from further patient care responsibilities at that time. In the event of a decision to release the Trainee from further patient care activity, the attending physician must notify the supervising Trainee on-call, Program Director, Associate Program Director or Department Chair, respectively, depending on the ability to contact one of these individuals.

2. A Trainee who has been released from further immediate patient care because of excess fatigue and/or stress cannot appeal the decision.
 - a. Trainee who has been released from patient care cannot resume patient care duties without permission of the Program Director, or his or her designee, when applicable.
3. Recognition by Allied Health Care Personnel
 - a. Allied Health Care professionals in patient service areas will be instructed to report observations of apparent Trainee excess fatigue and/or stress to the Allied Health Care Personnel's immediate supervisor who will then be responsible for reporting the observation to the respective supervising Trainee on-call, Program Director, Associate Program Director or Department Chair, respectively, depending on the ability to contact one of these individuals.
4. Recognition by Trainees
 - a. Trainees who perceive that they are manifesting excess fatigue and/or stress have the professional responsibility to immediately notify the attending physician, the supervising Trainee, and the Program Director without fear of reprisal.
 - b. Trainees recognizing symptoms of fatigue and/or stress in other Trainees should report their observations and concerns immediately to the attending physician, the supervising Trainee (if appropriate), and/or the Program Director.

D. Recognition in Non-Patient Care Settings

1. If Trainees are observed to show signs of fatigue and/or stress in non-patient care settings, the observing individual should notify the Program Director immediately. Program Director should privately discuss his/her observations with the Trainee exhibiting symptoms of excessive fatigue and/or stress, attempt to identify the reason for excess fatigue and/or stress, and determine the proper remedy that will be required to alleviate the situation.

E. Program Director Responsibility

1. Following removal of a Trainee from immediate patient care duties, the Program Director (in association with the supervising Trainee, if appropriate) shall determine the need for an immediate adjustment in duty assignments for remaining Trainees in the Program.
2. Subsequently, the Program Director will review the Trainee's call schedules, work hour time reports, extent of patient care responsibilities, any known personal problems, and stresses contributing to the stress/fatigue for the Trainee. The Program Director will develop a plan to reduce the Trainee's fatigue.
3. In matters of Trainee stress, the Program Director will meet with the Trainee personally as soon as can be arranged. If counseling by the Program Director is judged to be insufficient, in the sole discretion of the Program Director, the Program Director will refer the Trainee to the OSUMC Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by directly contacting the Designated Institutional Official. A referral to the wellness support team may also be indicated.
4. If the problem is recurrent or not resolved in a timely manner, the Program Director shall have the authority to release the Trainee indefinitely from patient care duties pending evaluation from an individual designated by the EAP. This will represent Academic Probation, Suspension, or Dismissal and will follow this Handbook as outlined in Section III below.
5. The Program Director will release the Trainee to resume patient care duties only after advisement from the EAP and will be responsible for informing the Trainee, as well as the attending physician of the Trainee's current rotation.
6. If the individual designated by the EAP believes the Trainee should undergo continued counseling, the Program Director will be notified and must receive periodic updates from the EAP's representative.
7. Extended periods of release from patient care duty assignments that exceed requirements for completion of training in the Program must be made up to meet ACGME training requirements.

8. A removal of a resident or fellow for the first occurrence of stress or fatigue may or may not become a part of his or her permanent record. If a pattern is observed and/or a letter of concern, academic probation or suspension is issued then that action associated with the occurrence of stress or fatigue shall become part of the permanent record. This will follow the similar policy associated with the "Academic Improvement and Corrective Action Policy".

II. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Information

OSUMC's EAP provides confidential counseling, consultation, evaluation, and information to Trainees and their family members. The EAP will provide up to three appointments at no cost. The EAP phone line is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Community Care EAP
218 W. 6th Street
Tulsa, OK 74119
918-594-5232 or 800-221-3976