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A Week Devoted to Wellness in the Preclinical Phase: Lessons Learned

Nethra S. Ankam, MD

Thomas Jefferson University, Nethra.Ankam@jefferson.eduFollow this and additional works at: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/rmposters> Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#)[Let us know how access to this document benefits you](#)

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A Week Devoted to Wellness in the Preclinical Phase: Lessons Learned

Nethra S Ankam, MD

Department of Rehabilitation Medicine

Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA



Background

During the 2017-2018 academic year, a large private medical college underwent a complete transformation of its curriculum from a primarily lecture based, traditional format to an integrated, longitudinal format that included both time limited blocks and longitudinal threads of content. Wellness, conceptualized at both wellness of the provider and the patient, is one of the eight threads.

Process

There was a unique opportunity to include personal wellness content during an unscheduled intersession week in the fall of the first year. Given that wellness is a difficult concept to define; that learners have different needs; in addition to challenges of class size; it was evident there would be challenges to meet the needs of all learners. The week was designed with input from both the student and faculty advisory boards that included leaders of the student personal counseling center and humanities thread.



Medical students knitting with anatomy faculty

Goals

- Provide a structured pause in medical school for you to reflect on your own wellness
- Allow time to explore the ideas of resilience
- Provide time for rejuvenation
- Allow you to start building productive habits to last you throughout your entire medical careers

Content for All Students

- Panel of fourth year students from the Gold Humanism Society
- Career planning
- Interprofessional story slam
- Lectures on burnout and the science of learning
- Small group discussions to make SMART goals.

Selective Content

- Mindfulness
- Improvisational acting
- Knitting
- Photography
- Nutrition
- Writing
- Music improvisation
- Art improvisation
- Discussions of the PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments) model.

Was the week effective? N=147 (54% response rate)	66%	Yes
	31%	No
	3%	N/A

Selected Quotes from Reflection Essays

After wellness week, I realize that physician burnout is a large problem, and if I don't take necessary precautions, it could happen to me

[The StorySlam] also helped me to remember that as a medical student and future doctor, there will be struggles, but the support provided by fellow team members will be crucial for my own resilience.

[Science of Learning] made me realize that even though I may think I am learning more by doing the extra set of flash cards, I might not be retaining this information as efficiently because I haven't allowed myself the time to recharge and effectively consolidate the information through healthy sleep.

The most valuable learning that I took from [Mindfulness], I noticed how much time I spend living in the past or stressing about the future, and thus how little time I spend actually living in the present

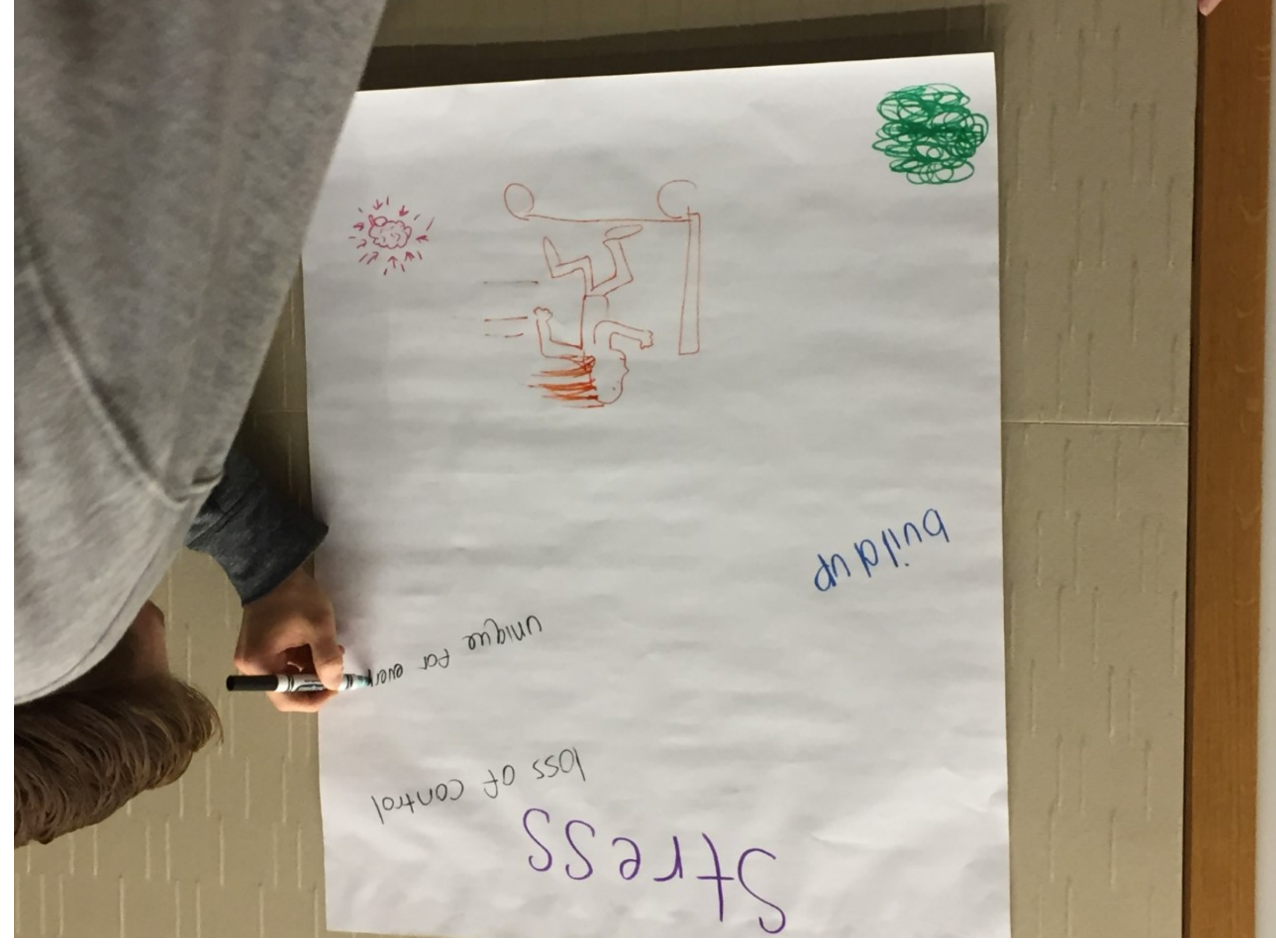
[re: Small Group] I can create goals that are separate from my academics, and strive to achieve them the same way I work towards academic goals.

Highlights

- Science of Learning Lecture
- Interprofessional Story Slam
- SMART goal creation in small groups
- Selective content that focused on active interventions and social connection, such as knitting, photography, art, writing, music, stretching.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Less focus on burnout, more focus on practical active interventions
- Improve scheduling, less downtime
- More physical activity
- Day of service
- More nutrition
- Fewer mandatory sessions
- Smaller group mindfulness
- More social connection
- Between students
- Between faculty and students



Medical students brainstorming with the ArtWell program <http://theartwell.org>