

## **Wellness and Burnout**

Evaluating for wellness and addressing burnout is challenging as a program director. Fellows may not be comfortable sharing burnout concerns or may not even recognize it in themselves. Thus, it is critical to set up effective ways to monitor. This is most important for the wellness of the trainees but is also a topic that is scrutinized by the ACGME.

### **Ombudsman**

- Every trainee at every program should know who their ombudsman is. This is an individual that by design is outside of the training hierarchy. They are not involved in the GMEC and do not report to the DIO. Their purpose is to be a safety valve if a trainee does not feel comfortable bringing something to the PD, APD or DIO.

### **Surveys**

- There are local surveys that many programs use to identify the rate of burnout in a program. These can get a sense of the “temperature” of a program. High rates of burnout should lead to changes in program structure.
- The ACGME survey to trainees also incorporates questions related to wellness and burnout. Reports are compared to national means and can also identify if your program needs more attention in this area.

### **Mentors**

- Some programs have trainees select mentors that they meet with intermittently.
- These mentors might function not just as academic mentors, but also as life mentors sharing how to be a parent and an allergist, how to navigate early signs of burnout as a faculty etc.

### **Program Director/APD meetings**

- These scheduled check-ins should not just discuss academic and research topics, but also address wellness.

### **Wellness committees**

- Many local institutions have wellness events and programs designed to foster community outside of work. Due to the nature that many allergy fellows do not function regularly with inpatient teams, there is a risk of feeling disconnected, especially in a small program.

### ***Suggestions***

- Never assume that your fellows are not struggling. Lead by example. Be vulnerable.

- Make sure there are several faculty in the program that fellows would feel comfortable discussing a struggle with. Don't assume that you are viewed as equally approachable to all of them.
- Make sure all fellows understand the structure within the institutions to promote wellness.
- Reinforce (and know) the availability of your local 24/7 support team for burnout/wellness issues.