

Welfare of Anaesthetic Trainees: Resources

Looking after yourself, seeking help when needed and “emerging unscathed” from your training years

We all know the value of keeping close relationships with peers, formal and informal debriefing. Our jobs are demanding. There is expectation to be knowledgeable, affable, unflappable, organized, in control, and immune from health issues. To quote a worthwhile article by Paul Eleftheriou in Vicdoc April 2009, “We are not superhuman”. Here are some other ways of diffusing, responding to and preventing stress, fatigue and health conditions impacting on work (You may not need some of these services yourself, but there are some handy numbers to know to give to a colleague in distress).

Nation-wide:

General Tips:

- ▶ Study Groups, adopt a Mentor, supervisors, colleagues, SOTs (Confidential discussion if required), a GP you can see regularly (Do you have your own GP?), Hospital Staff health clinics, hospital Chaplains offer counselling, not just religious support.
- ▶ Doctors Health Advisory Service in your state
- ▶ Does your hospital have confidential counselling available to staff?
- ▶ Private referral from your GP to a psychologist or counsellor. May be able to access some medicare rebates for this through a “Mental Health Plan”
- ▶ Avant
Have advisers available 24/7 – not just to give formal legal advice. They can give general advice and “If it sounds to the adviser that you’re pretty stressed out, they can even refer you to an external personal counselling service, through which you can receive up to six sessions with an experienced personal counsellor” (at their expense & anonymously). Avant encourages members to call them on 1800 128 268 at any time of distress
- ▶ Lifeline 131 114 or www.lifeline.org.au
- ▶ Lifeline Information Service 1300 131 114
- ▶ Beyond Blue Information Line 24 hour information and referral service for issues relating to depression and anxiety 1300 224 636 or www.beyondblue.org.au

State-based:

Victoria

- ▶ VDHP

The Victorian Doctors Health Program is a source of confidential, compassionate and discreet support service for doctors and medical students with health concerns. They offer advice, assessment and referrals for issues to do with stress, anxiety problems, substance use disorder, mental health disorders any other health problems including physical health concerns. They are also a good source of information. This is a free service, independent of the MPBV, AMA and employer organisations.

Contact information: www.vdhp.org.au, (03) 9495 6011 or email vdhp@vdhp.org.au.

- ▶ Doctors for doctors:
Medical Consulting Victoria
Private rooms in CBD
Telephone: 03 99398875
Email: lowe@medicalconsulting.com.au

- ▶ AMA Peer support services
Confidential support service for doctors staffed by volunteer AMA Victoria Peer Support Service counsellors
1300 853 338 (local call cost)
8am – 11pm every day of the year
- ▶ Alfred Hospital Mental Health Line
1300 363 746
- ▶ Suicide Line: Free 24/7 Professional Support VIC: 1300 659 467 www.suiceline.org.au
- ▶ Short term counselling is also available for staff within some hospital networks, eg Southern Health: Resolutions RTK, Royal Children's Hospital

New South Wales

- ▶ **Doctors' Health Advisory Service (NSW)**

www.dhas.org.au

(02) 9437 6552 (24 hours a day)

The DHAS (NSW) aims to ensure that no NSW doctor, dentist, veterinarian or undergraduate in these professions lacks access to health care. DHAS operates a telephone Help Line and are available to provide personal advice to practitioners in difficulties. They also provide health promotion and educational information through their web site and lecture to interested groups. The advice is used mostly in relation to drug and alcohol problems, stress and mental illness, or personal and financial difficulties. No problem is too trivial or too serious.

- ▶ NSW Doctors' Mental Health Program

www.dmh.org.au

ACT

- ▶ Colleague of First Contact (24hr)

Telephone: (02) 6270 5410

Helpline: +61 407 265 414

Northern Territory

- ▶ Doctors' Health Advisory Service

Telephone: (08) 8927 7004

South Australia

- ▶ Doctors' Health Advisory Service (24hr)

Telephone: (08) 8222 5501

Helpline: (08) 8273 4111

Queensland

- ▶ Doctors' Health Advisory Service

Telephone: (07) 3822 2222

Helpline: (07) 3833 4352 (24hr)

Tasmania

- ▶ AMA Doctors Help Line (24hr)

Helpline: (03) 6223 2047

After hours: (03) 6235 4165

Western Australia

- ▶ Colleague of First Contact (24hr)

Telephone: (08) 9273 3033

For Doctors in crisis, or not sure where to go for help with personal or health problems. This totally confidential 24-hr service is available to all Doctors and Medical Students. It can be contacted by the person themselves, or by a concerned family member, friend, colleague or staff member. Callers do not need to identify themselves. It consists of a group of experienced male and female GPs, and is independent, reporting back to no other medical organisation. Problems dealt with include stress, depression, suicidal thought, substance abuse, grief or concerns about illness.

Helpline: (08) 9321 3098

- ▶ “GPs for Doctors” program

Run by the Divisions of General Practice, provides information on self care and a list of GPs who have offered to assist in treating their colleagues. Email or call for the “GPs for Doctors” resource manual.

www.phdgp.com.au

www.frdgp.com.au

New Zealand

- ▶ Doctors’ Health Advisory Service

Helpline: 0800 471 2654 (24hr service)

- ▶ NZMA Member Advisory Service

(04) 472 4741 (8.00-5.30pm)

