The Healing Path: A Student Initiative to Address Mental Health

Matthew Goldfinger, Samantha Gottlieb and Alexander Nello
The Problem
The Problem

● A large 2016 meta study in JAMA showed the prevalence of depression among medical students was 27.2%
  ○ Some studies showing rates up to 60% of students meeting criteria for diagnosis MDD during their preclinical studies period.
● A 2008 study in Annals of Internal Medicine that found approximately 50% of students report experiencing burnout in their training.
  ○ This carries considerable morbidity with increased rates of substance and alcohol abuse, extreme risk-taking behavior, self-harm and suicidality compared to age matched AND education-level matched controls in other professions.
● In qualitative surveys common complaints include: Feelings of isolation, distance from the outside world, hopelessness, guilt, inadequacy, disorientation, fear of failure, insufficient time for self-care, and losing sight of the end goal of becoming a physician.
● NYIT-COM offers a supportive environment but we wondered if we could do more!
  ○ The underlined above are just some of the elements we hoped to address with this project.
Welcome to the NYIT-COM campus.

Gorgeous Scenery

A Pretty “Lake”

And Practically nowhere to sit and take advantage of it.
We Made Do...
Research guided our plan

- Robust support for the importance of nature-relatedness to happiness and self assessment of wellbeing. Works as a preventative measure.
- Social component important- shared enjoyment is a crucial mediator for maximal effect.
- Works as after the fact to reduce anxiety.
- Physical implications as well. Independent benefit from simply increased mobility.
There is process and content in “the becoming” of a physician. A foundation of reflective habits of mind, heart, and practice with processes of metacognitive thinking about thinking and meta-affective feeling about feeling can foster “practical wisdom” for engaging in messy complexities of practice and potentially influencing choices of how to act in difficult or morally ambiguous circumstances. Critical reflection on being and action (i.e., self-assessment of values, attitudes, beliefs, reactions to experiences, and learning needs in conjunction with deepened experiential learning) is integral to PIF. Guided reflection, both as an individual and in a group, supports students engaging as active participants in development of their PI, helping to cultivate a meaningful combination of qualities of expertise and values. Without reflection, it has been asserted, personal identity transformation cannot occur.
“Then you will see, it is all connected. It is a river that cannot be dried. You are ok. Everything will be ok!” - Ben L.

“I walk by this bench every day. I tell myself to stop & rest, take in the air, I feel calm. Thank you for this pen.”


Journal Entry
Meridian Hilltop Gathering Place
Washington, DC
"Chronic Illness back again
Tests, meds, monitors
tubes, machines, misunderstood
yet such beauty,
under unbearable load
Thank God for E-
now 19"

Journal Entry
Legacy Emanuel Medical Center
Portland, OR
VP Gathered a Team

**College of Osteopathic Medicine:**
Dr. Jerry Balentine (VP of Medical Affairs and Global Health)
Dr. Wolfgang Gilliar (Dean)
Dost Khalique (Information Technology Manager)
Renee Smith (Senior Procurement Specialist)
Karen Deasy (Director of Development)
Raquel Romanick (Associate Dean for Operations)
Shelley Cohen (Senior Director of Finance)

**School of Public Health:**
Dr. Sheldon Fields (Dean)

**New York Institute of Technology:**
Dr. Hank Foley (President of NYIT)
James O’Connor (Associate Director of Facilities and Operations)
Bill Marchand (Senior Director of Facilities and Operations)
Gina Arms (Finance and Procurement)
The Plan
The Healing Path Theme Proposal Contest

The Healing Path:
As students and practitioners in the healthcare field, life can seem to be a never-ending tidal wave.

- We serve our patients
- Immortality
- Fingerprints
- The spirit of compassion
- Role reversal
- Self reflection
- Death is a natural conclusion of life
- Patient’s lives we have changed
- The osteopathic energy model
- Empathy
- Spirituality in medicine
- Self responsibility
- Goal setting
- Failure
- Metamorphosis
- Stronger together
- Seeing the big picture
- Circle of life/Mortality
- Resilience
- Privilege
- Self doubt
- Health inequities
- Self care
- Do unto others
- Humility
- Five elements of nature
- Active listening

- Physician Assistant Studies, M.S.
- Faculty/Staff
- Osteopathic Medicine, D.O.
- Physician Assistant Studies, D.P.T.
- Physical Therapy, D.P.T.

- 47.1%
- 26.5%
- 14.7%
- 8.8%
Go forth, from this hallowed ground, this soothing pond, and halls around,

With eyes and ears, hands and levers, scalpels and sutures, mind, spirit, heart and soul,

Maintain the well and heal the sick, the downtrodden and well to do, of all gender and orientation, at the bedside and among the many,

To bring forth life and ease senescence, at minimal expense,

In our great nation of Washington and Lincoln, of Sacajawea and Martin, our salad bowl of many natives and immigrants, of every faith and tradition,

With a stethoscope about your neck, an ophthalmoscope in hand, and all measure of gadget and technology in your palm, on your wrist and on your lap,

Provide care that is primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, and humane,

With your arm, in arm, with the physician assistant, the nurse, the pharmacist, the psychologist, the dentist, and the other healers,

Apply with prudence the best of what’s been said, taught and written, by Hippocrates and Galen, Moshe ben Maimon and Ibn Sina, Pien Ch’iao and Charaka, Still and Osler, Fryette and Mitchell, Cecil and Harrison, and many others, and one day you,

Stay current and skilled, in the art and science, of structure and function, of maladies large and small, as what is known will surely evolve and change,

Remember, too, to heal and care for your self, to stay well and seek help when you are not, and to try to be there, to laugh and cry, with kith and kin,

And yes, engage in all manner of sacrifice of time and energy for the noble path you take,

Not so that we may live forever, but to bring contentment and lessen suffering so that we may all benefit, live long, prosper, and prevent our early demise

Humayun Javaid Chaudhry, DO, MS, MACP, MACOI, FAODME
Class of 1991, NYITCOM
President and CEO, Federation of State Medical Boards
Final Plans

1. Empathy
2. Fingerprints
3. Humility
4. Responsibility
5. Mortality
6. Compassion
7. Teamwork
8. Mindfulness

When 'I' is replaced by 'We', Illness becomes Wellness.
- Shannon L. Alder
COMPASSION

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.
- Dalai Lama XIV
EMPATHY

Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the wrong. Sometime in life you will have been all of these - Lloyd Shearer
MINDFULNESS

In today's rush, we all think too much - seek too much - want too much - and forget about the joy of just being.

- Eckhart Tolle

THE HEALING PATH

Dedicated by
John P. Salerno (Class of 1987)
Groundbreaking
Ribbon Cutting
Finished Product

★ The Healing Path raised over $100,000

★ Funds came from 26 COM alumni and 12 NYITCOM faculty and staff members

★ 3 Alumni Donors each donated $25,000

★ Donations ranged from $100-$25,000
Dynamic Installation

Student Feedback

More Landscaping

Rearranging Signage

More Donations!

- Teamwork and Donor Display - Dr. Daniel Ferrara (‘86): for his parents
- Compassion - Dr. Jeffrey Manasse (‘81): for his parents
- Empathy - In Memory of Michael Guttenberg (‘97): 9/11 responder
NYIT’s “The Box” Press Release

NYIT’s Communications and Marketing Team
Take Home Points

● Wellness
● Interprofessional Collaboration
● Alumni Support
● Faculty/Administration-Student Relationship
● Student Initiatives
● "My job as Dean is to get out of the way and let things happen." - Dean Gilliar
Acknowledgements

All of the donors!
Dr. Jerry Balentine (VP of Medical Affairs and Global Health)
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Gina Arms (Finance and Procurement)
NYIT Communications and Marketing Team
All of the students, faculty and staff that participated and supported this initiative!
Questions?

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