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Life Hacks for Medical Students to Thrive Beyond Survival – Dr Aszrin Abdullah

by [Hidayah](#) • November 6, 2023 • [0 Comments](#)



The medical field is notorious for causing brain drain amongst its pursuers and practitioners. This issue has been discussed at great lengths amongst academicians, employers and policy makers especially as it escalated in March this year with doctors rallying together in a strike, demanding for better work arrangements and benefits. Thus, those pursuing medicine should not only learn to survive but also thrive amid ever-changing challenges.

Change is known as the only constant in every aspect of life but there are still “evergreen” fundamentals that medical students should carry through their academic years all the way to their professional career.

Among them is having clear intentions. Medical students should start with determining a clear purpose of embarking the arduous journey of memorising medical jargons, multi-disciplinary lecture topics and setting leisure aside for study. It should be beyond realising parents’ ambitions or making practical decisions that matches your SPM results, as choice driven by passion can certainly be a source of motivation in times of uncertainty and burn out.

Students must also be prepared and equipped with life skills such as developing emotional resilience and managing stress that are just as vital as effective time management and study skills. Emotional resilience comes with promoting more positive emotions, being aware of negative thought patterns, validating one’s own

emotions and practising gratitude. Once these are practised, students are able to respond to stress well, identify the root problem with clarity and manage their mental health better.

Addressing the root cause of stress should include practising stress-relieving techniques, self-care and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Students should allocate time for hobbies, relaxation, spiritual growth, meditation and their loved ones. Assertiveness and setting boundaries are also handy skills in avoiding stress and burnouts. It is equally important to seek the support of academic mentors, counsellors, peers and family as often times having a healthy support system is proven to reduce stress and improve mental health.



Ultimately, students should have the willingness to have a 'growth mindset'. Challenges should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve without having to fear failure. Students ought to be open to adapt and adopt new learning methods beyond rote memorisation.

In short, mental preparation is fundamental in pursuing the world of medicine. Having the right mindset and life skills will assist medical students in withstanding the ever-constant challenges and thrive their way to becoming not just a skilled but compassionate doctor.

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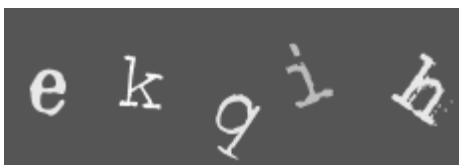
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