

WISHES Update – June 2020



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold and this academic year comes to a close, there are many facets of learner wellness that have been impacted and continue to be impacted. The intersections of health professions and health sciences education with public health have become even clearer. The training and wellness of our health services researchers and health care providers directly relates to the health of the community.

There is clearly a need to support our learners as they are faced with challenges and delays to their training. COVID-19 has contributed to the disruption of learning and working for CSM learners with implications for physical, mental, social, intellectual and occupational wellness. Nevertheless, learner resilience has been remarkable! WISHES congratulates all CSM learners for completing this academic year in such unusual circumstances. To those graduating, we wish you all the best in all of your future endeavours!

The WISHES team would like to thank the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) leadership for their support in promoting the WISHES COVID-19 Learner Needs Assessment which resulted in a 20% response rate with 540 responses from BHSc, BCR, GSE, UME and PGME programs.

Recent events in the United States have further highlighted the importance of equity, inclusion and diversity in medicine which are most relevant here in Canada, where racism and discrimination continues to exist. Racism impacts wellness. The Black Lives Movement (BLM) has offered the opportunity for long overdue change. The Black Medical Student Association (BMSA) has recently released their thoughtful [Calls to Action](#) for CSM comprised of three main themes, one of which is learner wellness. WISHES stands in solidarity with the BMSA and strives to advocate for the wellness of all learners at CSM.

The WISHES team has been hard at work in conducting ground breaking research and securing funding during COVID-19. WISHES has teamed up with collaborators Dr. Allison Brown and Dr. Rahim Kachra from the Program for Innovation in Scholarship and Medicine (PRISM) lab and together we have been awarded a \$15,000 catalyst grant from the O'Brien Institute for Public Health (OIPH) to support the global survey of medical learners during COVID-19 which has 6400 responses from 130+ countries. The PRISM and WISHES labs seek to help raise awareness about the intersections between physician training and health care. PRISM focuses on technology, quality improvement, education and design thinking in health care and WISHES focuses on wellness. Together these labs will leverage relationships between education and health care working with both OHMES and the OIPH.



WISHES founder Dr. Aliya Kassam and colleague Dr. Javeed Sukhera from the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University have been awarded a prestigious international grant from the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) in the amount of \$16,000 for a their project entitled: *Exploring Perceptions of Self-Disclosure in Medical Education*. The topic of self-disclosure is vastly under-explored within the medical education literature. There has yet to be an exploration of self disclosure of mental illness and addiction in medical education. Furthermore, the current context of COVID-19 and the BLM movement has added layers of complexity with implications for self-disclosure. We will be working with members of the BMSA looking at self disclosure in Black learners and the impact of racism on mental health. This study will be beneficial to scientific, scholarly and societal benefits alike because it will provide a deeper understanding of self disclosure among medical learners and may help advance our understanding of both how stigma manifests in the medical learning environment and how to address it, especially given the current context.

Stay tuned for a WISHES Advisory Committee in the fall and more important updates! Have a great summer!

Dr. Aliya Kassam, PhD

True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice. - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.