



HEALTHIER PHYSICIANS

Medical practitioners can take a number of steps to improve their health, and support the health and wellbeing of their colleagues.



PRIORITISE

your health and promote wellbeing

- Have a general practitioner and ensure you see them regularly.
- Adopt a balanced lifestyle: avoid taking work home and make time for your personal life.
- Monitor your work hours and schedule breaks where possible.
- Exercise regularly, eat a nutrient-rich diet and get enough sleep.
- Find humour in daily activities; it's therapeutic.
- Establish or participate in local professional networks, such as peer networks and mentor programs.
- Accept support from your colleagues, friends and family.
- Take time out to pursue your personal interests, relaxation or simply time to yourself.
- Be aware of the physical and emotional effects of excessive stress and burnout, on yourself and others; offer support if you notice changes in behaviour.

RECOGNISE

warning signs in yourself and others

High functioning individuals are often very effective at concealing quite high levels of distress, such as:

- feeling the need to put on a brave face
- struggling at work, or feeling overwhelmed
- poor concentration
- inability to make decisions
- disappearing while on shift
- increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- poor attention to physical appearance
- loss of energy
- may lack insight
- low moods, increased anxiety or irritability
- withdrawing or feeling isolated
- sleeping too much or too little
- colleagues raising concerns.

SUPPORT

your trainees and colleagues

- Check in regularly and ask if they are okay.
- Let them know if you have noticed a change in their behaviour.
- Take time to speak about experiences and listen without judgement.
- Suggest they see their GP or other health professional.
- Help them find information and resources about physician health and wellbeing.
- Encourage them to prioritise their health.

SUPPORT FROM THE RACP

RACP Confidential Support Program 1300 687 327 (AUS) 0800 666 367 (NZ)

The RACP offers a range of information and resources to support the wellbeing of its members and their peers, including modules on Physician Self Care and Wellbeing and Creating a Safe Workplace, which are freely available via the eLearning Portal; and confidential counselling via the RACP Confidential Support Program for members, which is run by Converge International (the RACP does not receive any information about the content of these calls).

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Doctors' Health Advisory Service has dedicated helplines for medical practitioners and trainees in each Australian state and in New Zealand. Find details for services in your region on the RACP web site. Many employers also have an Employee Assistance Program, and we recommend you contact your workplace HR department for details.

Find more information on support services available to health professionals on the RACP website at www.racp.edu.au/fellows/support-services-for-health-professionals.