

Wellbeing, Career, & Patient Safety for Health Pros

Reading time:

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The wellbeing of the healthcare community has never been more important than it is today. A practitioner's state of wellbeing and level of self-care can have a significant impact on the healthcare outcomes, good and bad, not only for the practitioner, but also for the patient being treated. Patient care and satisfaction, adherence to treatment and the interpersonal aspects of care can all be affected.

Common issues that can affect wellbeing among junior doctors and place patients at risk

Studies have demonstrated a prevalence of psychiatric morbidity during the final year of medical school which can increase significantly during internship, (up to **70% meeting criteria for psychiatric disturbance at least once**).

Smoking, use of illegal substances, depression, experience of bullying or harassment, lack of time, fatigue, work overload/demands, self-prescribing, inappropriate medications and employment related disputes can all be high risk factors.

Strategies to consider

MIPS recommends that healthcare practitioners follow employment protocols, expectations and employment contractual conditions. Familiarise yourself with work, health and safety regulations and other employment requirements regarding appropriate behaviour as well as AHPRA's expectations regarding codes of conduct.

And lastly, reach out to your medical defence organisation, like MIPS and/or professional association such as a college or AMA for advice/assistance any time you face a professional challenge.

Further to this, make sure you have a GP, do not self-treat or self-prescribe. Take prompt action when faced with challenging patients and do not allow matters to escalate. And most importantly, be honest and ethical to your patients and yourself.

Wellbeing is fundamental to overall health and happiness

If as a practitioner, you become, or are practising while, unwell, it may prove extremely difficult to perform at your optimum which in turn, may compromise the health outcome/s of your patient/s.

Compromised health and wellbeing that has impacted your practice can lead to scrutiny of your performance by the Boards, Colleges, employers, media and the community, therefore placing your career in jeopardy.

Placing patients at risk and causing any patient harm could potentially be highly detrimental to your career and as AHPRA recommends monitoring and maintaining your wellbeing can aid in career longevity and managing adverse events and outcomes.

The AHPRA codes of conduct set out guidelines and have detailed specific expectations to assist practitioners with monitoring and keeping their wellbeing in check. Refer to [Section 9 in the Dental Board Code of Conduct](#) and [Section 11 in the Medical Board of Conduct](#)

Prevention is better than cure

As MIPS medico-legal advisors are exempt from mandatory reporting we encourage all practitioners who have concerns about a colleague to contact MIPS for 24hr Medico-Legal Support on 1800 061 113.

Resources

[Medical Board Good Medical Practice - a code of conduct for doctors in Australia](#)

This information is not intended to be legal advice and as such should not be relied on as a substitute. You may need to consider seeking legal or other professional advice about your individual circumstances as appropriate. Should you wish to obtain further information you can review our [Member Handbook Combined PDS and FSG](#) or contact MIPS on 1800 061 113. You may need to consider seeking legal or other professional advice about your individual circumstances as appropriate. Information is current as at the date published.
