Good Stuff wellness e-newsletter: June 9, 2020

UC Davis Health Chief Wellness Officer Peter Yellowlees will send you “Good Stuff” wellness tips and resources every week on Tuesday.

A message from Dr. Peter Yellowlees, Chief Wellness Officer

White coats against racism and injustice

We are all changing.


This week, in view of our vital focus on racism and social injustice, I want to present the views of a number of our faculty (and photos of many more faculty, residents and staff), who have been actively involved in personal reflections and public demonstrations in the past week, following a discussion at the departmental well-being champions committee meeting a few days ago.

Katren Tyler, MD has collated these as below and we offer them to you as inspiring personal responses from which we can all learn. She writes:

*Here are our collective voices.*
*With strained hearts, we logged into our online meeting to discuss Department Wellness initiatives. In the week since the murder of George Floyd, so much was going on in our community, it was hard to focus on routine projects. Many of us were asking ourselves how we could have missed that systemic racism was our problem too – in the house of medicine, for our patients, for our colleagues and for our communities.*

*In fact, we all had something to say. Together, we changed the discussion to “what can WE do?”*
From Sara Aghamohammadi, MD

Donning my scrubs, white coat, and mask I headed towards the Capitol to participate in the White Coats for Black Lives protest. Together, we knelt on one knee for an interminable 8 minutes and 46 seconds. As each minute ticked on, my heart grieved for George Floyd. As we shouted “Say Their Name” for each unarmed victim, my voice caught in my throat as I felt the pain of their families. I heard the pain of an entire community that is filled with generations of anguish. We listened, we learned, and we stood alongside our Black American community to tell them that we will use our white coats to make black lives matter.

From Sarah Louie, MD

I joined a group on Sunday to help with teaching basic first aid to demonstrators. There I witnessed those who so deeply need to be heard attacked by the very people that many of us taught are there to help us. Racism is alive and well and we need to recognize it in ourselves and commit to doing better. I wanted to be there and to bear witness. I learned I have a lot to learn and I need to listen right now. I want to do whatever it takes for our staff and patients to know that they are seen, they matter, and we will stand by them no matter what.

From Katren Tyler, MD

As an immigrant, I felt I did not have the right to comment on the racial injustices I witnessed in this country. But now, systemic racism is MY problem. At the protest in front of the State Capitol, we could hardly recognize ourselves behind masks, but we could recognize why we were there. We must support and believe the Black community. We must listen. We won’t get it right, but we could hardly have got it more wrong. We must start now.

From Emilie Bhe, MD

I wanted so badly to be at the White Coats for Black Lives protest to show my strong support. Unfortunately, I couldn’t make it, as I needed to be home to care for my young daughter. I struggled with guilt and self-criticism, worrying that I wasn’t doing enough. I think it’s important that we show ourselves some compassion during this difficult and complicated time. If you couldn’t be at the protest on Tuesday, it does not diminish your commitment or passion for making a difference. We can all contribute in different ways. We can donate, talk to family and friends, work to make positive change in our organization. I was not there, but I am present in this moment and will do everything I can to fight against racism and injustice.

From Cherie Ginwalla, MD

As an immigrant woman, I have been taught to be quiet, to guard my opinions, to blend in. I learned about the African American experience from books. I tried to make a difference, alone, quietly – discussing disparities and my own biases with learners.

I cared for a Black child, whose father asked, “how can I trust you?” I saw it in his eyes…the Black lives lost to COVID, mass incarceration, poverty and systematic oppression. “How can I trust you?” He could not.
I heard George Floyd cry out. I started using my voice – as a woman, physician, educator and mother. I raised my voice at the State Capitol, chanting “Say Their Name.” I listened, quietly.

I went home and, quietly, talked with my children about how to use our voices...together.

We have posted longer versions of these personal reflections on the Clinician Well-being website HERE and encourage you to read them. We would be happy to post other thoughts along with these, if anyone would like to send them to clinicianwellbeing@ucdavis.edu.

Thank you to everyone.
Emergency Pavilion
“UC Davis is the best hospital system we've seen for mental health & regular health needs.”

Cancer Center Pulmonary Oncology
“Everyone was very helpful & understanding to my concerns. My doctor explained the entire procedure & answered all my questions. Also gave me a follow up call at my home.”

Davis 6 Cardiology
“Doctors & nurses were well informed about my medications and were able to make a change for my benefit.”

UC Davis Medical Group Davis Rheumatology
“I just never have any problems with this group. And I don't mind going to my appointments because everyone is wonderful.”

UC Davis Medical Group Elk Grove Endocrinology
“The doctors and staff at the Elk Grove Specialty clinic are outstanding.”