Peer Support Available Year-round

This month, we spoke with Dr. Emily Peoples to learn more about Peer Support and the importance of reaching out for help.

What is Peer Support?
The Peer Support Network is the foundation of an institution-wide program called COMPASS (Compassionate Peers and Stress Support) from the Office of Counseling and Workplace Resilience (OCW). Peer supporters provide timely emotional support for any team member who finds themselves in need of someone to talk to about challenging clinical experiences including unexpected patient outcomes, as well as stress, burnout or any other work-related concerns. Peer supporters have all received training through the Office of Counseling and Workplace Resilience in order to perform in this role. Peer support sessions are private and confidential, with the only exception being someone who is at immediate risk of harm to themselves or someone else.

How can residents reach out to Peer Support?
There are a few different ways to initiate Peer Support: (1) residents can contact one of the supporters directly, (2) supporters can also proactively reach out to someone and offer an opportunity for support if they recognize a concern, and (3) anyone can refer a colleague through an email to PeerSupport@med.umich.edu with a request for support. Many peer supporters have a logo in their email signature that links directly to creating an email where you can request support. Your request is processed by the program coordinators at COMPASS, who will facilitate connection with a Peer Supporter.

(Continued on Page 3)
The Gratitude Project

Wow! The Gratitude Project has received more than 190 notes of thanks since our last newsletter! Below, we’ve shared some recently submitted notes.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in a note to recognize residents, CRNAs, techs, admin, and staff as we work to build a culture that lifts up each other. This cycle is now closed, but stay tuned for information about the next cycle of The Gratitude Project.

Johnny Tran
from Kathy Risko
Thank you for all of your help on call the other weekend! You are the CA-3 we all aspire to be when we grow up :)

Amy Friedman
Her calm cool demeanor is a settling presence in the storm

Justin Barbat
from Kat Krukowski
Thank you for being the best senior, your teachings, and your patience. Thankful for our pairing on CV ICU!!!!!!

Emily Miner
from Samantha Sutkamp
Thank you for all the extra texts/calls and conversations throughout the year. Couldn’t have asked for a better office mate throughout all the new challenges. The extra kindness means the world, and I’m so happy we will be working together for another year.

Pam Mulholland and the Residency Ed Team
from Ben Cloyd
Thanks for running such an amazing recruitment season! It really went off great, and I consistently got feedback from applicants that they were very impressed with the interview process and were able to get a feel for what training at Michigan might be like. This was a Herculean undertaking and deserves all the praise I can give.

Stan Williams
from Lori Riegger
Stan is the epitome of an excellent tech. He seems to have a sense that we are going to need his help before we even know we need him. His years of experience and wonderful smile and laugh (especially the laugh) have brought expedient help and a sense of comfort to many anesthesiologists through the years.

Arden Vanderwall
You are such an inspiration! Thank you for always encouraging me and uplifting me, especially with Phil’s yummy snacks. I am so grateful for you and am lucky to not only have you as a co-resident, but as a friend!

Alex Morrison-Nozik
from Vu Willey
Thank you for helping Heather & me by manning the door on the day of ITE. We were scrambling when security did not show up on time to let us all in and we would not have been able to start on time without your help. It’s nice to know that we can always count on you to step up.

Andrea Bouwhuis
from JR
Saw that our intense neuro case wasn’t going great on centricity, immediately came in and did all the crucial tasks to help get things under control.

Kathy Risko
from Ruth
Thanks for being such a great friend and co-resident! You always take the time to make me smile — we co-residents and your patients love you for it!

Megan Banks
from Chris Siemer
Thank you for being an amazing team player during weekend call! You went above and beyond what the airway CRNA is expected to do and it helped make everything run very smoothly.

Matt Wixson
Thank you Matt for being one of the finest role models in this department. Your work in both diversity and medical education help to make this place better every day.
Peer Support (continued)

Why did you become involved with the Peer Support network?
I really value the well-being of all the people in our department, and especially our trainees. I want to make it as easy as possible for them to have accessible emotional support and someone to talk to that has been through similar experiences.

We all have times of distress in our life — unfortunately as some have already experienced, life doesn’t stop or get put on hold for residency. Whether it’s an adverse clinical event that causes secondary trauma or a challenging time in someone’s personal life that’s compounding stress or burnout, peer supporters provide a safe space to work through reactions to stress, provide education, and connect colleagues to additional resources as needed. It’s important that we encourage each other to reach out and get support during the aftermath of difficult events to move towards recovery and thriving instead of simply surviving.

We’ve made a lot of progress, but there’s still stigma around reaching out for support and feeling like it’s a sign that you’re weak or don’t have enough grit. In reality, asking for help is a sign of strength and self-awareness. It’s important to normalize asking for support to move away from feelings of shame and isolation. I want our trainees to see colleagues and leaders showing vulnerability by sharing their own challenges and coping skills, creating a culture where reaching out for support is the expectation and not the exception.

Resident Spotlight: Tyler Unsicker, CA-1

Where did you grow up and go to school?
I grew up in a small town (not a stoplight in sight) outside of Fort Wayne, Indiana, before moving to Indianapolis for college.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
I try to stay active despite COVID putting a huge damper on this. My wife and I have been working on a pretty extensive tour of the state/metro parks around the area. We definitely recommend the rec pass for your license plate if you don’t already have one.

What made you decide to pursue anesthesia?
Anesthesia was a required rotation in medical school, so everyone had the opportunity to check it out. Like many others, the pharmacology/physiology aspects stood out to me, but I also had a good number of mentors that pointed out the vast number of career endpoints that were possible by choosing anesthesia.

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I definitely plan on pursuing a fellowship, but am still very much undecided on which. I’m open on where to end up in terms of location. My wife, Kristen, is a Pediatric resident at U-M, so we just want to settle down in a place that is amenable to both of our career interests.

Tell us one last thing that is special, unique, and wonderful that we just must know about you.
I’m an avid Dungeons & Dragons player. Indianapolis hosts one of the biggest board game conventions in the world each year and I’ve made an effort to go each year for the better part of a decade.
Life in Residency

Match Day 2021

We are so excited to welcome 28 new residents to the program this spring! Matches had the chance to meet their co-residents and reconnect with the department during a virtual welcome on Match Day, March 19.

Our thanks again to the incredible work from our chiefs, residents, and education faculty and staff throughout this entire virtual recruitment season! This truly was a monumental team effort. Go Blue!

Mental Health Resources

- U-M Psychiatric Emergency Services: 734-936-5900 (available 24/7) medicine.umich.edu/dept/psychiatry/patient-care/psychiatric-emergency-service
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255 (available 24/7)
- HOA Non-Emergency Mental Health Services Michigan Medicine: bit.ly/3qNiQbx
- Office of Counseling and Workplace Resilience: bit.ly/33Xinxd
- Community Resources accepting UM Premier Care
  - Ann Arbor Consultation Services (evening and weekend hours available):
    734-996-9111  www.a2consultation.com
  - Huron Valley Consultation Center (evening and weekend hours available):
    734-913-1093  www.huronvalleyconsult.org
  - Lotus Consulting:
    734-478-7358  www.lotusconsultingpllc.com