

dear residents

It's Tough Being Human when Humanity is Hurting

March 5, 2022

Dear Residents,

It's March and both the winter and the virus are receding. Days are getting longer, and we've had a few very pleasant days with warm sunshine. The rank order list is in, and Match week will be here soon! Even as these positive turn of events lift us, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in [Ukraine](#). Along with the starvation crisis in [Afghanistan](#) and the continued plight of refugees in many parts of the world, sustained conflict and its associated human suffering is hard to witness. All of us have roots here and elsewhere and, in effect, everywhere. We are biologically and socially interconnected across the globe. I suspect that these events are taking a toll on your well-being. Like you, I imagine a world where all humans can live with dignity and security. Our profession is one of healers. We do this without hesitation, without regard to social status or ethnic origin. While we are adept at helping those in front of us, we feel helpless when those who need the most assistance are so far away – be they in [Ukraine](#), [South Sudan](#), or [Myanmar](#). Humanitarian crises are increasingly difficult to solve because of the toxic mix of climate change, smoldering conflicts, and geopolitical constraints.

Coping with the stress of human suffering, be it on a small scale (the patient in front of you) or on a larger scale (an entire nation), can be overwhelming. The news feeds are hard to ignore, but you do have the power to occasionally unplug and focus on self-care. I have a patient with the looming diagnosis of pancreatic cancer on my service right now. The work up is in progress. It has been hard to get him to focus on anything else. Today our team nudged him to watch some movies. I personally enjoy tidying up when I am stressed, or taking a long walk, watching cricket, or cooking something that requires a decent amount of concentration and planning – you know the type of recipe that was created to make you a time and temperature freak!



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Our GME website has a well-designed set of tools for [self-screening](#). I do want to remind you that the resident wellness center is available for confidential counselling. I know that you have endured an enormous amount of disruption and stress and that these international events are an added threat to your well-being. We are here to support you. I enjoyed that last firm dinner and look forward to the next one.

Warm regards,

Dino Kazi