

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Title of research

What cognitive, affective and behavioral adaptations help medical students overcome their struggles?

Introduction

This study aims to explore the affective (feeling) and cognitive (thinking) reactions and behaviors of medical students who struggle academically in order to understand their adaptive or maladaptive responses, the extent they are self-regulated, and how successfully they cope through their own narrative.

Getting through medical school can be a stressful experience. As most medical schools admit students with strong academic abilities, the assumption may be that students should successfully cope with the rigorous demands placed on them. These may include an increased academic workload, concern for academic performance and being in the company of equals of intelligence and motivation.

Guiding Questions

1. Tell us a little about yourself. Which year of medical school study are you in and what hobbies or interests do you have outside of medical school? How do you think medical students at NUS medicine cope with medical school?

2. Have you ever struggled in medical school? Can you share what happened? How did you overcome the struggle? What thoughts, feelings and behaviors you experienced helped or made the struggle more difficult?

Academic grades can either motivate or demotivate a student. In an ideal situation, academic grades drive stress in a positive way resulting in motivation and better performance.

However, if taken negatively, not achieving good grades could demotivate students and cause undue stress and in extreme cases even burnout.

3. What has your experience been with your academic grades?

Are you aware of any resources available to help medical students cope? Do you think these resources are helpful? What are the barriers for students to utilize such resources if available?