

Overcoming the overwhelming

Reflection: I am not the person I expected to be. I expected to be more curious, more organized, and more confident. Instead I feel like I am a step behind, trying to keep my head above water, feeling my fatigue overcome my sense of curiosity. This is due to the massive amount of material we are expected to master. I have come to terms with the fact that the days of feeling comfortable are long gone. I have not felt comfortable with my level of knowledge since beginning medical school. I haven't felt fully prepared or confident in any of my abilities.

Advice to self: A new and unpredictable situation is not a place for you to be criticizing yourself. It is an opportunity to discover the unknown, so jump in! Make mistakes now but be confident in the fact that you have been given the tools to care for your patients. Now is the time to use these tools and figure out your flow.

Reflection: The adjustment of letting go of the normal is more difficult. I realized when I was younger that I had a different outlook than most of my peers and therefore, took a path labeled as difficult and time consuming. I sacrificed my time willingly in undergraduate school and felt rewarded for my efforts. In medical school I haven't felt that sense of fulfillment. There is always a bigger test coming, a taller hurdle to clear. I now look at my peers outside of medical school and feel envious of the paths they have chosen. I want the normal- coming home and sharing a meal with my significant other, talking about our day, making plans for the weekend- but instead I feel strapped to the expectations of being a medical student. The expectation of doing 40 boards questions and 50 flashcards a day, attending class and extra curriculars, and having a healthy sleep and exercise schedule. I fear that the normal will keep being pushed

back and that I will never fully arrive at a place where it exists in harmony with my career in medicine.

Advice to self: Savor any and all moments of normalness. Know that the expectations are necessary to reach the goal, but don't fulfill them because you are "supposed to"—fulfill them for the ones that love and believe in you. Do it for your future patients. Also don't let other's perceptions scare you. Don't over complicate simple goals. Stay strong and be confident in your abilities. The normal can be attained and balanced with the expectations. The more experienced you become the easier it will be. Patience.