Overview

Historically biomedicines perspective has been that health is represented in normal functioning of the body and therefore disease is disruption of normal function. In 1948 however, the World Health Organization (WHO) broadened this definition to include “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (1). Later, in 1984, the WHO incorporated the biopsychosocial model into its definition defining health as “the extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.” (2).

As a population, students are particularly vulnerable to health care issues. Of some 20 million students in U.S. colleges and universities, 600,000 students report some form of disability or medical problem. These problems are also on the rise. In 2001-08, the number of incoming students at four-year institutions reporting mental health issues increased by 90%. (3). Perhaps not surprisingly medical students are particularly at risk with 34% medical students reporting symptoms of anxiety above even the median of a normative population of psychiatric outpatients. (4). When polled as to why students experience this stress the following 4 factors rank the highest: #4 financial problems, #3 social issues, #2 academic pressures and the #1 stressor for college age students is access to information.

As Traditional Chinese Medical Students at AOMA we are constantly asked to address the questions: what is health and what is wellness. We do so 99% of the time with the focus being towards our clients when we would be additionally served posing those questions for and about ourselves. Thanks to this medicine we are uniquely situated to use a myriad of self-care/healing techniques however it wasn’t until my second year that I even heard about Gui Pi Tang being known as “student formula”. My goal with this QIP is to provide a framework for education, discussion, and creativity with a focus specifically towards the AOMA community. This tool will empower students and help them not only in times of illness, but in times of wellness- to help them define their own healing journey so that they might more successfully do so for their current and future clients. All by simply providing access to information and a greater sense of community. To satisfy needs and realize aspirations.
The principal idea behind the Student Health Collective Webpage is to offer the students a centralized place where students could seek collaboration, education, entertainment, and information through the often challenging experience of being a student at AOMA. In my own experience I found myself saying “if only I knew that earlier” or “where did you find that out” and my vision is that the creation of this website would provide a nesting place for the amazing breadth of knowledge represented in our student population. From “do you remember Dr Wu’s Stop Smoking Formula” to “have you heard of Cat’s Notes?” to “Wow, Stephanie Dwyer’s Doctoral Thesis is amazing!” How wonderful it would be if we could find it all in one place.

My original intention for this page would be that it would be a tool of the Student Association hence the language around “For Us, By Us” and that it be a tool that had the potential of being constantly reshaped as the student body evolved and as culture evolved. For example, in the brief time that I was a student the #me too and LGBTQ movements became even larger parts of our culture and I envisioned this website as potentially representing the most up-to-date concerns and interests of the students. Call it an AOMA Wiki + Facebook + Instagram + you name it. Because as a web page the potential is limitless. As a platform I chose Wix because it’s free and intuitive.
The initial sub-pages I identified as potentially useful were:

- About / Why? - or in other words, what is the mission statement of this website
- Forum - a place to nest any/all sub-threads
- Blog - a place to nest stories, and personal accounts.
- Events - for events specific to the AOMA community.
- Inspi/relaxation - fun stuff to blow off a little steam.
- Contact - sign up and stay in the loop.
- Community - interesting people and orgs kindred to AOMA

ABOUT/Why?

- A mission statement for the page itself.
- My mission for creating the site in the first place put simply as “Because it's challenging and we're stronger together”.
- The “who we are, what we want, and how we hope to do it” framework hopefully helps students self-identity and be realistic/honest about what their needs are. An opportunity for some values assessment.
“Our” Forum
- I imagined this page as requiring a login so that only students at AOMA could view and post rather than members of the general public.
- I imagined a wide range of topics. Anywhere from specific health topics like mens, womens & LGBTQ health to “everything you need to know about passing boards”.
- I also saw this as potentially a great place to nest the amazing work of our Doctoral students and/or other AOMA graduates’ publications.

Blog
- A place for students to say whatever is on their mind, in long form.
- This could be:
  - A place to rant
  - A place to inspire
  - A place to exhibit creativity or inspiration
  - Literally anything
- As much as this website has form, meaning places specifically designated for one purpose, I find it also important to provide a space which is formless to become whatever the student wish it to be.
Upcoming Events

- As we all know Austin is at no shortage for goings-on. So much so that it’s often a challenge to even wade through and identify what might be of interest.
- Conversely, so many of our students and allied practitioners are curating fascinating events of their own.
- Or maybe everyone is just getting together on Friday at Radio to study for the Points 2 final.
- Here’s where we can stay informed about happenings outside the walls of AOMA.

Inspi/Relaxation

- Sure, there’s no shortage of adorable puppy pics on the internet however to increase traffic/interest and to lighten the mood a bit I’m of the opinion there should be a page for a little bit of fun. And there are a handful of Acupuncture / TCM specific memes which are really funny. So why not?!
Contact Us

- It's also important for those who've interacted with/on the website be able to contact the administrators directly. This can help protect the students in any event where the website is used inappropriately. This in turn can help the administrators shape the website to better serve the students. Also this can help alert the page administrators to any technical issues.

Community

- The not-so-secret overall mission of this website is really to build community. The feedback I most often heard from recent graduates was that they wished there was a way to stay in touch. This page could help serve that purpose.
- It would also help in developing a referral network as we graduate and establish our own practices and products. Answering the other question I see most frequently on Facebook “does anybody know a practitioner in…..”
References:


