

## Your career as a medical practitioner



Dr Kemi Doll (left) and Shawna Kaye Lester, conceptualiser of Caribbean Medical Professionals Summit, at the Caribbean Medical Professionals Summit at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.

**EVEN IF** you try to live a healthy lifestyle, sometimes you will get sick. This may range from a mild cold or flu to a terminal illness. While you can be proactive about your health, sometimes it can seem like the luck of the draw, with seemingly healthy people falling ill for no apparent reason.

That is why healthcare settings, such as doctors' surgeries, hospitals and other healthcare centres, are so crucial to a functioning society.

According to Dr Kemi Doll, physician, researcher and career coach, as a healthcare professional, you are responsible for the care of people when they are at their most vulnerable. People attend hospitals or other healthcare settings for a variety of reasons.

“From broken limbs, major emergency surgery, mental health crises, routine procedures and a whole slew of other reasons. It makes sense that when seeking healthcare assistance, people can be confused, upset, angry or even aggressive. As a worker in a healthcare setting, you are entitled to be safe and secure and ensure your well-being while you are at work,” Dr Doll said.

On the other hand, you need to be compassionate and friendly and have an upbeat bedside manner as a doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional. You do not want to perpetuate the stereotype of the cold, clinical and uncaring medical professional.

“Being kind, courteous and polite goes a long way to making patients feel comfortable, safe and secure while in your care. You can find an excellent middle ground in your communication style by practising assertion,” she said.

For instance, if a patient is being difficult, is getting upset or is refusing treatment that will benefit them, you can explain, using evidence and your expert opinion, that you are entrusted with their care and that the advice you are giving them is to their benefit.

“Some ways to be assertive in your manner can be using plain, clear language, warm and open body language and a pleasant tone. However, you should still convey the point that you need to make as it pertains to the patient’s care. Avoid raising your voice or crossing your arms, and ensure that you make eye contact with the patient,” Dr Doll said.

Dr Doll who was one of the speakers at the Caribbean Medical Professionals Summit, held at The Jamaica Pegasus said there is no doubt that medical professionals lead hectic lives; the mental and physical strain of the industry is extraordinarily demanding when compared to the demands of most other professions.

“While medical practitioners such as nurses, doctors, surgeons, and many others are often at high risk of burnout, self-care and efforts to optimise general health are undeniably important. Most medical professionals spend their working hours stressing the importance of ideal healthy habits and encouraging patients to partake in self-care routines. It is not at all uncommon for professionals working in the medical sector to overlook their own needs,” Dr Doll said.

Even though this result is a mere factor of overwhelming schedule and endless working hours, she shared the following self-care and general health tips will keep you prioritising your health and not just the health of your patients.

- STRESS MANAGEMENT METHODS

Medical professionals are well known for leading chaotically busy lifestyles as working conditions are undeniably demanding. Therefore, you should have a few stress management methods to help you cope with the mental demands of your job. Regardless of the methods you find appealing and realistic; it is vital to have stress management methods as a go-to when you are feeling overwhelmed.

However, when it comes to practising learned stress management techniques and methods, you may feel discouraged by your insanely chaotic work schedule. Even though you may feel that your busy days will leave no time for efforts at reducing your stress levels, you will be able to find a few minutes now and then by carefully evaluating your work schedule. Giving yourself even five quick minutes to relax can make a massive difference in stress and anxiety.

- DEVOTE SOME TIME TO EXERCISE

Once again, you are likely under the impression that your schedule will not allow you the time required to exercise as often as you need to, enhancing your time management skills may provide you with enough time. You could devote half an hour to a morning jog, or relaxing yoga. You already know the exceptional benefits that a few minutes of exercise will provide you with, as you are likely encouraging your patients to identify an available time in their days for physical activity.

- CONFORM TO A BALANCED DIET

The food that you choose to eat will determine your energy levels, nutrient intake, and even your overall mood for the day. Even though you are tasked with a busy schedule that may render fast foods and convenience meals a seemingly suitable solution, eating unhealthily can enhance your chances of burnout and negatively impact your ability to function at your best. Even though eating healthy can be more challenging for those with a busy work schedule, meal prepping guides often aim to drastically reduce the amount of time it takes to eat healthily.

You may find that spending a few minutes meal prepping just one day per week will enable you to enjoy the benefits of a balanced diet. As there is meal prepping guides and recipes readily available online for daily snacks, evening meals, and everything in between, you will be able to craft a suitable eating plan for yourself that won't consume the little bit of free time you have to yourself.

- QUALITY SLEEP AND ENOUGH RELAXATION TIME

As a medical practitioner, you do not need to be informed of the positive and negative impacts that sleep quality can have on your body and your mind. However, you may be neglecting your sleep quality out of habit. Instead of pushing yourself to

your limits and risking burnout, you should consider reading sleep environment guides that will help you better decorate your bedroom for quality sleep. Alternatively, considering natural sleep aids may be enough to enhance your ability to get a good nights' rest every night.

- FINDING A HOBBY THAT SUITS YOUR SCHEDULE

Even though you probably feel as though your professional career does not allow room for a hobby or interest, the rewarding benefits of a hobby may surprise you. You don't have to devote too much time towards your chosen hobby as certain hobbies are not as time-consuming as others. You could consider reconnecting with your inner artists or perhaps gardening is advantageous for you.