Dear Class 2021:

Alison Sutton-Ryan and I wanted to reach out and provide a few thoughts about the changing conditions regarding COVID-19 and the impact it has on your ability to prepare for and take Step 2.

This current unexpected situation can create a sense of anxiety. It can be particularly challenging when the information changes and there are no clear answers. Please remember that this is an ever-changing situation. We at COM-T are here to support you. Remember that this is a global challenge and that med students around the world are coping with the same situation. Solutions will be developed to address this disruption in your education as are needed for all medical students around the world. You are not alone.

As you consider how to move forward you are likely wondering how to use your time and when best to schedule your exam. While we are currently operating on the idea the Testing Center will be operational by the 15th there is a possibility given the trajectory of the COVID-19 virus this may change as well. How you manage that looks different for everyone. In the meantime, here are ways to use your time effectively and take care of your mental health:

- Consider reducing your hours of studying each day to ward off burnout
- Reframe studying for a test, to time to develop your skills for deep understanding
- Practice with intention, methods of effective learning i.e. time space repetition, reframing and consolidating
- Consider using multiple sources for questions, such as Pre-Test, MKSAP in addition to Uworld to test and develop your mental agility
- Determine your tolerance for ambiguity and make scheduling decisions based on your tolerance for change (schedule now so you have a date, or being able to change it if need be)
- Find ways to maintain connections (even remotely- call, video chat, write a letter)
- Mindfulness and meditation (there are many online yoga and meditation classes, apps and resources)
- For some creating a schedule and structure for the day can be helpful (even at home all day- write out a plan- include connections other and some movement)

UME Mental Health Services continue to be available with remote teletherapy and telepsychiatry options available. We are receiving a high volume so please be patient as we connect with you.

Please reach out to Dr. Ganchorre at athenag@medadmin.arizona.edu to create an individualized plan for Step 2.

Sincerely,

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