Three biggest challenges of being a veterinary student

Dr. Merrill Simpson

1. **Knowing** when to say “no” and when to embrace opportunity. There are many activities to get involved in at school, from clubs to student government. Having extra-curricular activities is important for networking and leadership experience. As you move on to your second and third years, delegation is extremely important, and later you will need to scale back your extracurriculars in order to focus on clinics and for more time to study for NAVLE.

2. **Adulting:** Finding time to take care your responsibilities outside of school, like getting an oil change, getting a physical, or paying your bills. Even simple tasks become much more challenging as a veterinary student. Try to plan ahead and schedule and set aside time for these tasks during breaks, weekends, or evenings.

3. **Relationships:** Staying in touch with friends and family can always be a bit of a challenge, but this is amplified during veterinary school. Your family and friends may not understand how demanding your schedule has become. Be patient, and come up with strategies to manage your relationships, whether means scheduling a phone call or setting expectations that you will be out of touch at times. But, for your psyche, make sure to make time for those close to you, because it will always be refreshing to talk about something other than school.
Three ways to organize your busy vet student life

Dr. Courtney Campbell

Essentially, when your life is organized, the joy will follow. But it can be a serious challenge to stay organized when the demands on your time are so intense and the chaos of medicine surrounds you.

When vet student life gets makes you feel disorganized, discombobulated, and scattered, collect your organizational composure with these 3 easy steps.

Write a list

Checklists work! Not only does they serve to organize the most important tasks, but it helps to triage what you need to accomplish. Creating checklists allows your energy and thoughts to focus on the best and most efficient way to accomplish those tasks rather than trying to remember what they are. The best checklists are short and achievable.

Make a Victorylist

A victorylist is the opposite of a checklist. This is a list that you create at the end of each day in which you list everything that you were able to accomplish throughout the day. Essentially, you’re showing yourself that you’re accomplishing more throughout your day than you think you are. That gives you a great boost in confidence and motivates you to accomplish tomorrow’s goals with more passion and energy.

Delegate

Don’t be afraid to reach out to others for help. Or, split a task into its component parts, and politely assign them to other people. You’d be surprised how willing some would be to help you when you need it most.

Facts about Vet School

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges released their annual report of data related to member veterinary colleges.

- There are 13,323 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) students studying at 49 member institutions of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).
- Of those current students, 2,614 are historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) (up 1.1 percent over last year), and more than 81 percent are female.
- Students are paying an average of $31,979 for in-state and $52,613 for out-of-state tuition, and 47.7 percent of them are sharing $35,269,054 in scholarship support.
- About 80 percent will graduate with debt that averages $169,046.

We all want to stop worrying about money, gain clarity and accomplish our goals. But how do we get there? Check out the Vet Candy Guide to Mastering your Money and start making smart money choices today!
Three tips for great communication

Dr. Courtney Campbell

Veterinary students can have very stressful days. Being able to communicate effectively, while a work in progress, can actually make your life easier. Here are three keys for more effective communication with clients:

1. Consider your audience
One of the most intricate relationships to ever exist is the human-animal bond. This dynamic can be complicated because it is highly individualistic and may be based on a specific set of circumstances. As you discuss pertinent medical details, always try to consider your audience. A millenial may have different concerns about their pet than a retiree. Someone who is slightly older may prefer face-to-face communications, whereas many millennials prefer to communicate via text, social media, and email.

2. Listen
It's tough to be an effective communicator if you aren't listening to the other person. Being an engaged listener is challenging when you have a deluge of emergency patients to triage and reams of diagnostics to evaluate. One study showed that on average, doctors interrupt patients within 12 seconds of them first speaking during primary care visits and throughout the appointment—often, before they have finished explaining an issue. One effective technique to help you focus on listening is put whatever you have in your hands down. Similar to looking up from your phone when someone is speaking to you, the act freeing your hands signals to the other person that you are letting go of what is currently occupying your mind so you can concentrate on them. Essentially, it sends the message to your clients that you value and care about what they have to say.

3. Announce your goals and objectives
There is a reason why the phrase “Head’s up” is so common. It’s a powerful alert to keep people out of danger or prepare them for what's ahead. This phrase is also helpful to make someone aware of something so they can plan appropriately. They can then adjust to the information being said before it’s too awkward or too late.
Secrets to making fitness fun

Arlene Torres

Is the only workout you are getting from walking from the parking lot to your classroom? That is not exercise, check your Fitbit and see.

Fitness is important for a productive and happy person – you know it, you want to do it, but you don’t have the time? Are you stuck between deciding whether to spend another hour studying or taking the Zumba class you have been eyeing? Well, if you want to feel better, physical strength and fitness have a role to play.

When you exercise, you will feel pumped with the increased serotonin in your system and also experience more strength, agility and enthusiasm from that 30 minute exercise each day.

Here are some ways to pack some fitness into your packed schedule:

Go for HIIT! Not much time for a workout? Try High Intensity Interval Training which crunches intense workout into a small time-frame. As many as 20 minutes are enough for a power-packed workout. Regular exercise even helps with better sleep. And HIIT won’t take long!
Have a locker at the gym! Don’t waste any time in packing and unpacking the gym bag and rent a locker to keep everything you need there. Every minute counts, doesn’t it? And a locker comes with an added advantage of not needing to break your back (literally) carrying heavy bags.

**Quickie workouts!** Why wait to get a solid hour to work out? If you have 15 minutes, squeeze in a short yoga session, or just do some weights or a quick sprint! Shorter bursts of exercise once or twice a day are good enough to keep you ticking.

Walk! Sitting on your bottom will not make any matters better. it will just make your back bad. Try and walk every 30-40 minutes or so. Take the stairs, park farther so you can walk more, get off one stop before to get a walk to work – these are all tricks to walk it up. The circulation gets a boost and so does your mood.

**Go full body!** Instead of focusing one body section like they do in structured workouts at gyms and personal training, go for full body toning and exercising because you are short on time. Go for a swim if you like it, because there is no better full body workout that swimming. You can also try variations of burpees.

**Dance it up!** If the regular workouts bore you and you are facing lack of motivation in doing them, go for a spicier version of workout – any dance-based exercise like Zumba or bellydancing. The dance keeps you entertained and the moves make you fit. Variety is the spice of life.

**TV fitness!** Say yes to watch TV and your favorite shows but not like a couch potato. Make it fitness time. If you have a stationary bike in your apartment, place it facing the TV and hop on while you watch your favorite show.

**Use the desk time!** Study time can be converted into some fun workouts too! the idea is to steal whatever little time is there right, so go for some textbook curls or shoulder shrugs or even some breathing exercises as they do it in yoga for a calmer and a happier you.
AVMA Trust supports you with:
Three cool perks of being a SAVMA member

AVMA Trust provides tools to protect you while you are learning to protect your patients and clients. The AVMA Trust is the combined insurance group including the AVMA PLIT and AVMA LIFE available only to AVMA and SAVMA members. Together, these products offer essential coverage to protect you while you work to protect your patients.

Three cool perks of being a SAVMA member are:

1. **AVMA PLIT** provides student professional liability insurance at no cost to SAVMA members. Clinical experiences may begin your very first year with volunteer work, part time employment, or externships. AVMA PLIT wants you to be protected even as a student from malpractice claims that could derail your career. Even though you are a student, you are at risk of malpractice lawsuits and student professional liability insurance can help protect you. The AVMA Trust will pick up the tab for your premiums while you are in school.

2. **AVMA LIFE** provides $25,000 of life insurance to every SAVMA member at no cost. Provide protection for those that matter most to you in the event the unthinkable happens. AVMA LIFE provides this policy to every SAVMA member attending school in the United States.

3. **AVMA LIFE** also offers a basic protection package for SAVMA members. For only $22 per month, students can receive disability insurance that could provide $500 per month for up to five years in the event of a covered disability. In addition, in the event of a covered disability that causes a withdrawal for a semester, the disability coverage could pay up to $2000. This package also includes a rabies vaccination benefit that helps cover the costs of rabies vaccinations and titers, plus $100,000 of term life insurance.

As a SAVMA member, you are part of the largest veterinary student association in the world. Make the most of your SAVMA membership and let the AVMA Trust protect you and your career.
Ten ways to eat healthier

In the hustle and bustle of vet school life, it is hard to find the time to cook something healthy. If you have to leave early in the morning and you are coming back late, you won’t be quite motivated to begin whipping up some healthy stuff the moment you enter the house, right? But eating right and eating at the right times are extremely important things which can help you feel great and be energetic. The gut has another ‘brain’ of its own! The amount of neurons and receptors is high enough to give it a ‘feeling’ of its own. This feeling can be made nice and happy by putting healthy foods in your stomach.

Time is short and there isn’t much scope for cooking and other kitchen work so let us help you start small with a few inspirations:

Quick-fix meals via microwave:
The microwave presents ore opportunities to cook healthy meals quickly rather than just being a tool to heat up frozen meals. Be it a quick quiche, a mug cake or cinnamon breakfast quinoa – the microwave can be your go-to for any proper yet healthy meal. Eat the right food while spending lesser time cooking it.

3 ingredient meals:
It may sound a little strange but 3 ingredient meals can be high on nutrition as well as great for your tight schedule which allows little time to prep extensive meals. Ample ideas are available on the internet for your quick and easy meals.

Iron fuel-up:
We seldom pay any attention to the importance of minerals but the lack of them can produce severe symptoms of deficiency. One such mineral is iron which when deficient causes depressive symptoms and also fatigue. Iron also improves muscular strength and can improve the quality of your day. munch on oatmeal, lentils, spinach and lean meats.

Soups and stews to the rescue
Soups can be great comfort foods and also can be dense in nutrients without loading you up on excess carbs or fats. Make a batch for the week and store in freezer and you can thaw as required. The healthy soups can be made in variety and stored for emergency food situations! Microwave comes to the rescue here as well!

Smoothie shortcut
Dump all the dry, non-liquid ingredients in a Ziploc bag and stash in the fridge. When you want a smoothie you can simply unzip and pour milk or water and blend in the blender for instant, no-think smoothie which is great for health and tastes great too. Instead of sugar use dates or banana and make it even more healthy! Don’t forget to put spinach in, for the extra iron boost.
Caffeine dose for the day
People might look down upon when you are at the 5th cup of coffee for the day, and it is even not advisable to go for so much coffee for its high caffeine content but a little coffee revs up the metabolism and helps you feel more energetic and alert. Keep ground coffee or a portable manual grinder and enjoy your cup anytime of the day right at your work desk.

Don’t do everything yourself
You don’t have to go at it alone. If family doesn’t or can’t help, or you live alone, why not take assistance from apps and home delivery services that can provide your groceries at your doorstep? Maybe you can hire some help when you prep weekly meals? A slight investment now can help you get started on a healthier lifestyle.

Prep weekday meals on weekends
Make and store as much food you can when you get your weekly off so that there is less chaos on a weekday when you are trying to get everything on time. Chop veggies, prep them, make smoothie bags, precook your quinoa and meat and rice and just keep the assembly pending for the particular weekday. Store in separate labeled containers and if school going kids are there in your household, have weekday wise, kid wise boxes ready and stored in the fridge to make things easier later.

Less snacking, more meal
Snacking can easily lead to overeating, gaining weight and feeling lethargic. Too much snacking can even be bad for your sugar and electrolyte levels. There is lower satiety despite a lot of food. Instead, limit the snack time to 2 or 3 times a day and have 3 square meals at any rate, a cup or two of tea or coffee thrown into the mix for a fulfilling, nutritionally sensible meal plan for the day.

Mindful eating
Eating with your focus elsewhere confuses the brain as it is engaged in two activities and hence digestion becomes improper and hormone levels also fluctuate. You eat well but you don’t get the benefit of you don’t eat with your mind focused on the food. For those 5 minutes, close your laptop and set your phone aside, and actually taste what you are eating. Pay the food respect and it will respect your body.

Use a slow cooker
Just dump the ingredients into the pot, set timer and leave! A healthy dinner will be ready when you reach back home and it will even stay warm, thanks to this wonderful invention called the slow cooker which takes the number of hours you would want it to take to cook anything. Some can even be controlled via smartphone-based controls – so that there is more involvement with the cooking process even when you are not near it.

Start having a good relationship with food today and read the Vet Candy’s Guide to Healthy Eating
Why we all need more wellness in our life

Wellness is a state of mind – but it can be inducted into the mind easily! You can do certain things, even when short on time, to ensure that you feel alive and well at all moments.

It is more than being just “free from illness.” A mentally, physically and emotionally fine person can be said to be in a state of wellness. That’s the goal. Being well is what we are all working hard for. Toiling day in and day out is mostly because we want to be comfortable at the end of the day. But is it happening?

The overworked and overstressed forget why you are working so hard and what for, sometimes we want to focus on the bad things like looming bills, disrespectful customers, and debts.

Wellness as a goal can stop all of this and enable a better lifestyle infused with more energy, willingness and excitement amongst vets.

Here are a few inspirations to help you feel kicked and ready for any kind of life struggles:

Hydrate! We often forget the magic of drinking water and how important it is for our body and soul. Water is the best. Keep bottles of water on your desk and bring water with you when you travel.

Understand and manage stress! Look for addressing your stress instead of shoving it under the carpet. Sip green tea listen to music or take a quick walk around the block instead of turning to unhealthy options like binge eating ice cream or chips.

Limit the tech! How much phone and how much gadget in life directly points towards how stressed you are in life because clearly the more social media, the more the escapism of reality. Mute the notifications put the phone far away from the bed. Better yet, avoid your phone completely when at home.

Meditate! It is important for your wellness. 5 minutes in dim light before bed can calm you down, help you think clearly and will likely result in a more productive next day.

To-do lists! They help you stay organized and give you more focus. But being realistic in your to-do’s is equally focus.

Travel! You don’t need to spend all your savings but a small, not very fancy holiday can be just the recipe for your wellness. Everyone needs a break from time to time.
Do you need therapy?

Dr. Dara Querimit

Seeking out therapy is an individual choice. There are many reasons why people come to therapy. Sometimes it is to deal with long-standing psychological issues, or problems with anxiety or depression. Other times it is in response to unexpected changes in one’s life such as a divorce or work transition. Many seek the advice of counsel as they pursue their own personal exploration and growth. Working with a therapist can help provide insight, support, and new strategies for all types of life challenges.

Therapy can help address many types of issues including depression, anxiety, conflict, grief, stress management, body-image issues, and general life transitions. Therapy is right for anyone who is interested in getting the most out of their life by taking responsibility, creating greater self-awareness, and working towards change in their lives.
What actually happens during therapy?

Dr. Dara Querimit

Every therapy session is unique and caters to each individual and their specific goals. It is standard for therapists to discuss the primary issues and concerns in your life during therapy sessions. It is common to schedule a series of weekly sessions, where each session lasts around fifty minutes. Therapy can be short-term, focusing on a specific issue, or longer-term, addressing more complex issues or ongoing personal growth.

There may be times when you are asked to take certain actions outside of the therapy sessions, such as reading a relevant book or keeping records to track certain behaviors. It is important process what has been discussed and integrate it into your life between sessions. For therapy to be most effective you must be an active participant, both during and between the sessions. People seeking psychotherapy are willing to take responsibility for their actions, work towards self-change and create greater awareness in their lives.

Here are some things you can expect out of therapy:

• Compassion, respect and understanding
• Perspectives to illuminate persistent patterns and negative feelings
• Real strategies for enacting positive change
• Effective and proven techniques along with practical guidance

Get happy, get mindful!

Mindfulness is usually defined as a way of paying attention and being aware of the present moment and of the concomitant experience, assuming a mindful attitude, that is intentional and non-judgmental, in order to reach an acceptance of self through a greater awareness of sensations, perceptions, impulses, emotions, thoughts, words, actions and relationships, as they occur in the here and now. Among other things, this mindful attitude of paying attention also allows one to readily grasp the rise of those negative thoughts that contribute to emotional malaise, which lead to ever greater possibilities of exploration, expression and change of such contents. Check out Vet Candy’s Guide to Mindful Living for more.