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## Implicit Bias Mask: Perseverance in Medical School

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# Perseverance in Medical School

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Learning Community: Orange 29



# What Our Mask Represents

## Outside: What aspects of our identities do we present to others?

- Background - different ethnicities, cultures, and heritage are a large part of who we are
- Interests - the things we enjoy are also part of how we define ourselves
  - Personal - hobbies, stress relief activities
  - Professional - research interests, health issues we are passionate about, medical specialties we are interested in
- Feelings - we recognize that the way we portray our feelings outwardly may not always align with how we feel internally
  - Outward feelings - happiness & contentment, satisfaction, motivation

## Inside: What aspects of our identities do we NOT present to others?

- Although our internal identities are defining aspects of who we each are, we may not want to share these aspects with others for various reasons - shyness/introversion, fear of judgment, discomfort associated with vulnerability
- Feelings - we often feel inclined to hide any signs of experiencing negative feelings
  - Inward feelings - tired, not in control, overwhelmed, difficulty adhering to personal commitments made to oneself
  - Societal stigma associated with mental health struggles
- Implicit biases - inclination to hide signs of difficulty = inadvertent participation in stigmatization of mental health struggles
  - As medical students, at times we feel unmotivated, exhausted, overwhelmed/stressed, etc. However, we often make a conscious effort to avoid displaying these feelings outwardly
  - By doing so, we inadvertently promote the rhetoric of equating mental health struggles with weakness
- Professional identity formation: patience, perseverance, diligence, tenacity
  - We all have implicit biases and the first step to combating them is to acknowledge their existence - both self-awareness & receptivity to external feedback are necessary in order to gain awareness of our biases
  - It is important to remain open minded and flexible, as we anticipate encountering several situations that push us to re-evaluate our thought processes
  - Re-shaping the way we think, feel, and respond to certain situations will not happen overnight - it is a process that demands dedication and resilience

# What Our Mask Represents

## **Outside**

- Personal identities: national origin
- Interests: hobbies, stress relievers
- Outward feelings: tired, happiness, contentment

## **Inside**

- Inward feelings: tired, not in control
- Personal identities: family, tradition, hard work
- Professional identity formation: diligence, tenacity, perseverance, patience