



Growth Mindset in Medical Education

A Storyboard Resilience Reflection

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Introduction

This project was completed by six second-year medical students at the Wayne State University School of Medicine to reflect on ways to thrive and adapt to the ongoing stressors in medical school using a growth mindset. The purpose of this project is to increase student resilience during a difficult pre-clinical study period and foster skills to carry into a future medical career.

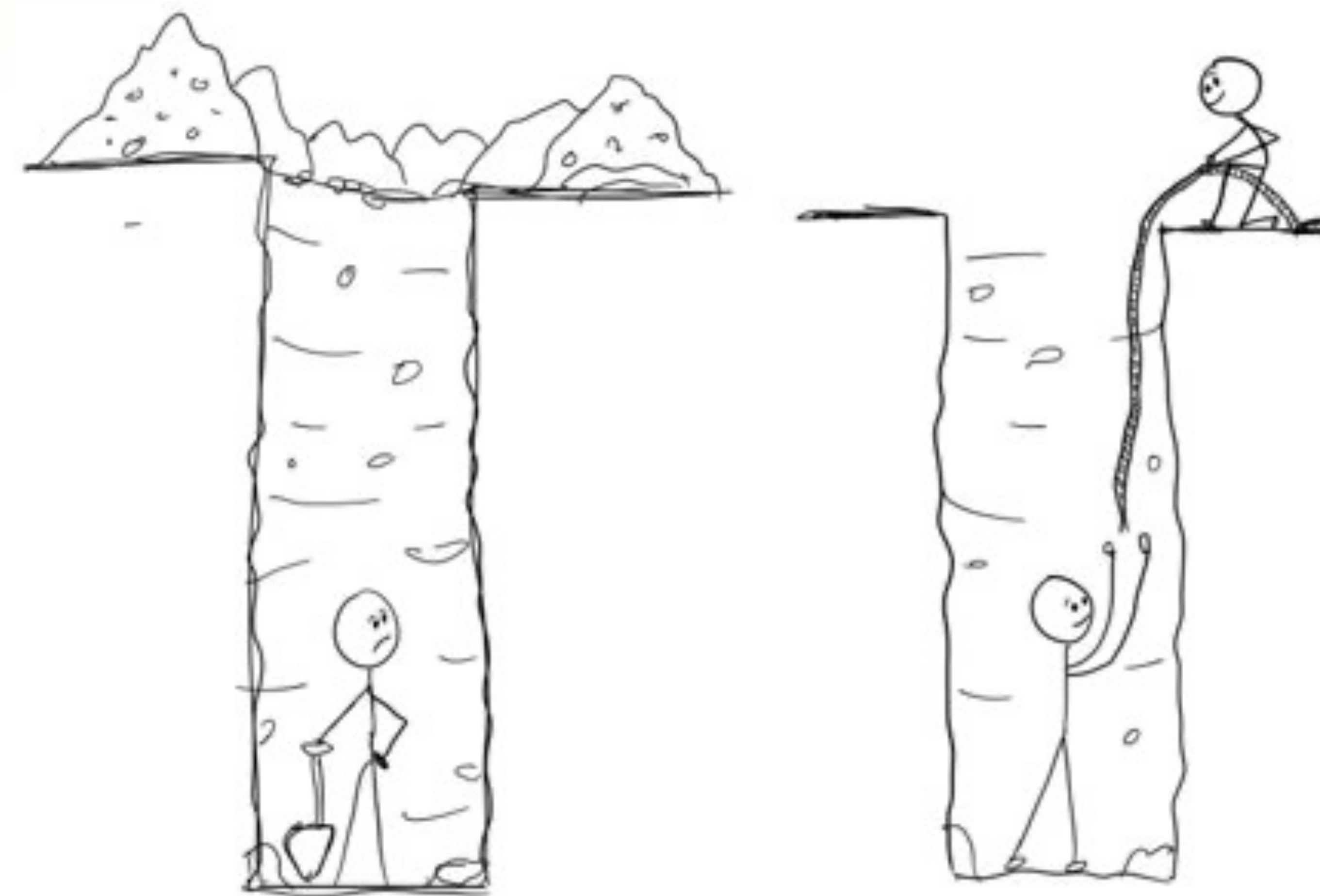


Background

A growth mindset is the belief that intelligence can be developed and improved through effort and learning. Students with a growth mindset embrace challenges, persist in their efforts, and view setbacks as opportunities for growth.^{1,2} In contrast, a fixed mindset is stagnant and can limit personal growth and hinder learning, because it assumes that abilities are predetermined and cannot be developed. Research has shown that promoting a growth mindset through interventions can enhance motivation and academic performance, especially in subjects like science and math.³ Instead of seeing failure as a reflection of one's intelligence or abilities, those with a growth mindset view it as a valuable learning experience. They analyze their mistakes, adapt their strategies, and use failure as a step to improvement.

Methods

For this project, we asked peers the common negative thoughts they were having that hindered their academic success in medical school. We then brainstormed collaborative and positive approaches to change the narrative on this negative thinking.



"I'm going to fail. I'm so far behind"

"I feel like everyone is smarter than me"

"This site has excellent anatomy practice questions"

"Here's a mnemonic I used to memorize the TCA cycle"

"I am getting every question on this review wrong"

"Everyone in the class is so far ahead of me"

"Hey, I'm feeling the exact same way. Maybe we can study together"

"It is important to take breaks, let's meet up and grab lunch"

By actively reframing obstacles, one can build the skills of growth mindset and resilience. Those with a growth mindset are open to new ideas, feedback, and constructive criticism. They seek out opportunities for self-improvement and value the input of others throughout their educational journey. These are important skills to have in any profession, especially one that involves lifelong learning such as those in the medical field.⁴

Conclusion

By empowering students to cultivate a growth mindset we hope to help each other succeed in the academic setting. However, a growth mindset is not just about using these phrases, but also about genuinely believing in one's ability to learn, adapt, and improve as a medical student and future healthcare provider; actively fighting against a fixed mindset. We hope to further incorporate this into Wayne State's curriculum.

"Reaching out to our peers for help academically and socially is a meaningful and powerful way to support our studying endeavors and maintain our mental health. The people around us have a wealth of resources and perspectives, and we can gain so much by forming connections with those who are going through similar experiences as us. Using empathy to foster community-building is an important step in creating a network where each of us can depend on and support one another through the difficulties we encounter as physicians-in-training." – WSUSOM students

References

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