

Darkness Amidst Celebration

Category: Alone

written by Anonymous | September 8, 2023

We regret to inform you...

My heart sank into the depths of my stomach, and it felt like it was being digested slowly by my stomach acid. I dropped my phone and pinched myself hoping to wake up from this cruel nightmare. I couldn't feel my pinch. I was completely numb.

The unimaginable idea of not matching to a residency program had suddenly become a reality. It felt as if years of hard work had instantly evaporated.

How did this happen?

My application didn't have any red flags, and it wasn't like I was scraping by with just a handful of interviews. I interviewed at a dozen programs, and all the feedback I received prior to and during interview season was largely positive.

Why did this happen?

Countless thoughts flew through my mind. My phone was beeping left and right with text messages from others expecting good news. I wanted to throw my phone against the wall, stop the endless vibrations and bury myself face-first in my pillow. But I couldn't. I had to work. There was no time to grieve. I had to develop a brand-new personal statement and a list of programs to apply to within twenty-four hours.

The next three days were a blur. My classmates were celebrating while I sat at home fielding calls from desperate programs hoping to fill their spots with applicants equally desperate. I hibernated from social media because seeing my friends carefree while I wept each night was too much to bear.

This process of scrambling to find an open residency spot after four years of medical school was truly an awful experience. It crippled my self-esteem and made me question everything around me. This was compounded by my thinking that everyone around me had matched and that I was a lonely loser. I was unaware of the fact that five brilliant people in my class applying to the same specialty also didn't match. If it wasn't for my close group of friends, family and mentors checking in on me (and feeding me) throughout the whole process, I might have succumbed to the darkness.

When match day rolls around next year and some of you inevitably experience the same reality that I did, embrace your support system. Do not try to traverse this obstacle by yourself. Let them in on your suffering and remember, you're not alone.

Anonymous