Lisa Post, PhD  
Director, WellConnect

How long has the Housestaff helpline WellConnect been in operation?  
WellConnect began offering 24 hour phone access for confidential consultation and referral to mental health services in February 2011. Residents and fellows can reach our clinician by calling 650-724-1395 to ask questions or to be matched with a mental health professional from our comprehensive panel of providers.

What is the background and purpose of WellConnect?  
WellConnect was spearheaded by Dr. Laura Roberts when she became Chair of the Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in 2010. The program has three approaches: provide the helpline as a safety net for residents/fellows in need; provide consultation to program directors, faculty and staff regarding mental health concerns in house staff; and provide educational opportunities including lectures, workshops and wellness curriculum consultation.

So faculty can contact the program to discuss a resident that they are concerned about?  
Absolutely. In addition to our clinical referral program, we offer consultation to faculty about how to determine if a resident is in distress and discuss ways to intervene and facilitate a referral if appropriate. Faculty can contact Dr. Post by calling the WellConnect line at 650-724-1395.

Will the fact that a resident or fellow called the helpline be placed in their record somewhere?  
No, the phone log is completely confidential. Also, most of our referrals are to providers outside of the Stanford system, and as such all records are kept completely separate from Stanford. Residents also have the option of accessing services provided by the Department of Psychiatry, and we have provided for confidential record keeping within the system.

How much has depression been a factor in the residents who have contacted the program?  
So far, about 25% of calls to our service have been by individuals with depressive symptoms. Burnout, a precursor to depression, has been noted in approximately 50% of callers. We are also seeing folks who are calling us when life stressors are impacting them, but before they are experiencing more serious symptoms. This is terrific, because we can help the individual address problems before they become debilitating.

What are some of the outcomes that you have seen after residents contact the program?  
We have been able to match residents with resources that fit their schedule and particular area of concern within a few hours of making the initial call to WellConnect. It is very gratifying to hear back from residents after they have utilized our services. So far, we have had great feedback.