

Dr Fida Afiouni Speech

Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you Ghada for inviting me to speak to our graduates today, it's a real honor.

Dear graduates, I'm not here to give you any advice (although I could, because of my greying hair). I just wanted to share with you how I feel about your graduation today. I attended the SHARP graduation of the previous cohort and I felt so inspired. I don't know whether you realize it or not, but seeing how such busy people like you, with already demanding work schedules, and demanding family responsibilities, have undertaken additional work with the noble aim of better serving others, has truly moved me.

This reminds me of a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Each one of you has embodied this spirit through your dedication to SHARP. Whether you are a medical student, medical doctor, PhD candidates, research fellows, or residents, I find your commitment to improving healthcare outcomes to be inspiring.

What I also like about this program is the diversity and resilience among you. Having students from countries, each with a uniquely challenging context such as Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine bring in perspectives that enrich this program and our community. Now putting my feminist scholar hat on, I cannot but acknowledge the nine women in this group, whom I am sure had to push their way through numerous barriers to be here today, and I look forward to seeing more female leaders in health research.

So, congratulations to each of you. Enjoy this moment, and keep that spirit of service and excellence alive in everything you do.

Thank you, and congratulations again.