

Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians: PREP during the Core Clinical Year

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Session Summary

Coping with the challenges of the principal core clinical year of medical school has been likened to being “thrown head first into the water” and presents challenges to third year medical students. Students encounter new clinical situations that are unregulated; there are many intense experiences, and many first experiences – significant exposure to patient illness and death, being confronted by intense emotion, perceived non adherent and manipulative patients, etc. Prior observational studies suggest this is a time during which students are at risk for decline and loss of empathy (1,2). Several recent studies demonstrate that promoting structured reflection with faculty focused on their experience promotes retention of empathy(3). One intervention was developed in the context of Learning Communities (4). Other outcomes of reflection include personal growth in interns (5).

| Promoting students’ ability to deal with such challenges through partnership with faculty mentors within Learning Communities offers a path toward personal growth and resilience, and promotes the retention of empathy. At the University of Massachusetts Medical School, one Learning Community Mentor, in partnership with three medical students designed and carried out an elective to help third year students cope with the challenges they faced in third year. The elective sessions use mindfulness-based meditation, other mindfulness exercises, and appreciative inquiry, and narrative exercises to achieve its goals.

This workshop will allow participants to take part in one module of the Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians (PREP) elective, hear about the full elective, and consider how they can apply the elective or some of its methods in their teaching at their home institutions.

Measurable Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the University of Massachusetts Medical School Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians (PREP) Elective.
2. Demonstrate understanding of key teaching and learning methods in the elective through participation and debriefing of:
 - a. Mindfulness-based meditation exercise
 - b. Mindful practice and reflective activities
 - c. An appreciative inquiry narrative
3. Discuss applications of these teaching methods into activities at participants' home institutions.

Workshop Session Outline

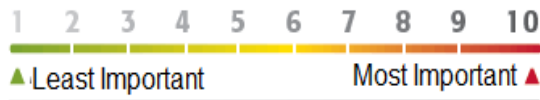
1. Introduction of participants, goal setting and introduction of PREP Elective -**15 mins**
 - a. Intros, goals and then outline of details of the elective at UMass
2. Mindfulness-based meditation and mindful practice exercises with debriefing-**30 mins**
 - a. Meditation with debriefing
 - b. Mindful practice activity and description of other mindful practice activities
3. Appreciative Inquiry narrative and debriefing - **25 mins**
 - a. Discuss principles of appreciative inquiry
 - b. Participants will listen to an appreciative inquiry based narrative about working to function at their best during their clinical experiences.
 - c. Whole group will reflect on the exercise and learning from it
4. Whole Group Discussion of application of the workshop and its activities back at their home institution - **20 minutes**

References

1. Chen D, Lew R, Hershman W, Orlander J. A cross-sectional measurement of medical student empathy. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2007;22:1434-1438.
2. Hojat M, Vergare MJ, Maxwell K, et al. The Devil is in the Third Year: A Longitudinal Study of Erosion of Empathy in Medical School. 2004; *Acad Med*. 2009; 84:1182–1191.
3. Rosenthal S, Howard B, Schluskel YR, et al. Humanism at heart: preserving empathy in third-year medical students. *Academic Medicine*. 2011;86:350-358.
4. Osterberg LG, Gilbert J, Lotan R. From High School to Medical School: The Importance of Community in Education. *Med Sci Educ* (2014) 24:253-256.
5. Levine RB, Haidet P, Kern DE, et al. Personal Growth During Internship A Qualitative Analysis of Interns' Responses to Key Questions. *J Gen Int Med* 2006; 21:564–569.
6. Krasner MS, Epstein RM, Beckman H, et al. Association of an Educational Program in mindful communication with burnout, empathy, and attitudes among primary care physicians. *JAMA* 2009;302:1284-1293.
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VALUES WORKSHEET

1. Clinical Knowledge



2. Effort/ Enthusiasm



3. Self-Care



4. Efficiency



5. Procedural Skill



6. Empathy



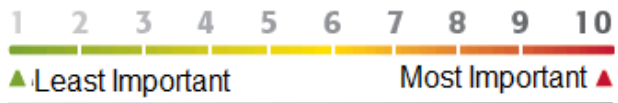
7. Grades



8. Communication Skills



9. Patient-Centeredness



10. List you Own _____



Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians



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◆ **Mission** ◆

UMass medical students from all four classes identified multiple challenges during third year, including increased time demands and stress, difficulty finding balance, and difficulties adjusting to a new role. This optional enrichment elective is designed to address these challenges, helping third year medical students build coping skills, promoting solidarity with classmates, and supporting the development of thoughtful, thorough, empathetic, and self-aware student doctors.

◆ **Objectives** ◆

1. Develop a personal practice that will **harmonize** with their busy schedules
2. Speak from experience when conversing with peers and future patients about the principles of mindfulness and its role in **stress-reduction** and performance enhancement
3. Identify multiple **strategies for coping** with the stresses of medicine and know which ones work best for them

◆ **Curriculum & Schedule** ◆

1. **Introduction & Mindful Communication (Thurs, May 5 from 6:30 – 8):**
This session will introduce mindfulness, narrative, and reflective listening and allow students to develop a practice plan going forward.
2. **Working within the Hidden Curriculum:**
This session will consist of reflection and meditation exercises focused around student experiences in teams on the wards, examining the role of the hidden curriculum.
3. **Future Planning with a Present Mind:**
Following career day, this session will focus on how to go about choosing a specialty and planning fourth year in a mindful way.

4. **Improving Medical Outcomes:**

This session will allow students to learn firsthand how improving attention and awareness can help you avoid medical errors.

5. **Dealing with Suffering:**

This session will focus on resilience and reflection on challenges that students have met so far, with a focus on patient and physician suffering.

6. **Sustaining Yourself & Sustaining Your Practice:**

During this final session, students will reflect on the course and the year, and discuss how they can continue to use what they have learned during the course in their lives and their future clinical practices.

*Note: Session dates TBD

♦**Evaluation**♦

Students will be required to attend and participate in at least 5 sessions, as well as complete feedback questionnaires.

♦**Resources**♦

In order to bridge the 6-month gap between the first and second sessions, we have provided a number of resources on the subsequent pages. We encourage all students to practice their mindfulness and reflection skills either on their own or in small groups during this time period.



UNLESS THE MOMENT IS UNPLEASANT,
IN WHICH CASE I WILL EAT A COOKIE.

♦**Emily Levoy's Guide to Mindfulness Meditation**♦

What is mindfulness meditation?

A lot of people think that meditation is all about clearing the mind and getting rid of thoughts, but mindfulness meditation is more about developing a different relationship with thoughts or feelings or anything else that arises. Instead of pushing thoughts away, or getting caught up in them, try to just notice whatever is going on with a curious attention. It can help to categorize the types of thoughts that arise (is it planning, fantasizing, or remembering?), and then just let them drift away. This can help you to notice your thoughts without getting too engaged in their content.

Some stuff that might happen when you meditate and what to do when it happens:

It can be a little daunting to try meditating for the first time. Here are some things that will almost certainly happen to you when you meditate, and how to deal with them. Remember, the most important part of meditating is sitting down to do it. Whatever happens during while you are sitting, it is okay. There is no way to fail at meditation or to be a bad meditator.

Getting caught up in your thoughts:

You may be focusing on your breath one minute and then completely lost in thoughts the next without knowing how you got there. When you realize you have been distracted in your thoughts, try to just acknowledge that thinking has occurred, without judgment. It can help to categorize your thinking. Were you planning, fantasizing, or remembering? And then, bring your awareness to your body. Did your thoughts introduce any new tension in your body? Let yourself relax, and when you are ready, you can bring your attention back to your breath. The breath is always going to be there for you, so you don't need to rush back to it or feel guilty that your attention has wandered.

Getting super antsy:

Your body might not be used to sitting without distractions, and in response you may either feel like you should be doing something more active or you should just turn off and go to sleep. If you get really antsy, or feel claustrophobic in your body, my advice is instead of imagining how difficult it will be to stay still for the rest of the meditation, try to just feel whatever your body is feeling right now. Explore the sensations associated with all of this pent up energy. Maybe you'll feel warmth, or tingling. And when you attend to the actual feeling, you may notice it's not that bad. It may even change. That being said, if you are feeling extremely uncomfortable, it can help to open your eyes, which is totally fine.

Getting super sleepy:

Instead of feeling antsy, you may notice yourself getting very sleepy. If you fall asleep, that's totally fine, but before you do, I'd recommend trying to explore the feelings of sleepiness. Where in your body do you feel it the most? Maybe it's behind your eyes, maybe your limbs feel like they are getting heavy. What does the sleepiness feel like? Rest your attention wherever you feel the sleepiness the most, and try not to judge yourself if you do fall asleep.

Feeling discomfort/pain:

You may notice pain or discomfort while you are sitting. Try to pinpoint exactly where you feel the pain or discomfort, and zoom in on it. What does it feel like? Is it sharp or achy? Is there warmth? Does it change with the breath? If the feeling is too intense, you can always return your attention to your breath as a refuge. And if you need to move or shift positions, definitely feel free to do so, just try to give yourself a little space before you react.

Introduction to the exercise:

Find yourself sitting in a comfortable position. Back straight, shoulders back, but also let yourself relax. When you are ready, close your eyes and bring your attention to your body. What does your body feel like, right now, in this moment? Are you relaxed or tense? How much energy do you have? Keep your attention here for a few moments, and then, when you are ready, bring your attention to your breath, going in and out. Breathing is already happening; you don't need to change anything. Maybe you notice that you feel your breath in a certain spot in particular. Maybe you feel your breath in your nostrils, air flowing in and out. Or maybe in your stomach, rising and falling. Or maybe you feel the air in your throat. Wherever you feel your breath the strongest, gently rest your attention there. Whatever thoughts or feelings arise, allow yourself to notice them, and when you're ready, gently return to the breath.

◆ Other Resources ◆

YOGA RESOURCES

Doyogawithme.com. Free. Offers hundreds of streaming yoga videos for practitioners of every level.

Yogaglo.com. \$18/month. Offers over 1,000 yoga classes online taped live at the studio's Santa Monica location. You can filter classes by time, level, and style.

Gaiamtv.com. \$9.95/month. Site offers 6 different channels with videos yoga, spirituality, nutrition, and healthy living.

YouTube is filled with great yoga. Here are some good places to start:

20-minute yoga class: Relaxation, with Colleen Saidman

Yoga with Tara Stiles

Basic Yoga Practice for Dummies (great for brand-new beginners)

Standing Yoga Poses: Home Practice from Yoga Journal

Yoga for Insomnia from YogaToday

Simply Yoga FREE—Personal Trainer for Quick Yoga Workouts (iPhone app). Free

Yoga101, from my yogaonline.com (iPhone app). Free

MEDITATION RESOURCES

Insight Timer (app). Free. Allows for tracking of daily practice and access to free guided meditations.

Calm (app). Free and paid guided meditations

Headspace (app). Free and paid guided meditations. Great for beginners, set mindful moment reminders and also has meditations designed for kids.

Relax Melodies: Sleep Zen Sounds and White Noise for Meditation, Yoga, and Baby Relaxation, from iLBSoft (iPhone app). Free

Take a Break—Guided Meditations for Stress Relief, from Meditation Oasis (iPhone app). Free

Free Relaxing Sounds of Nature, from Red Hammer Software (iPhone app). Free

Mindful Meditations, from UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Center—can be found on iTunes University

Mindfulness Meditation, from Mental Workout Inc. Lets you track your meditation practice. Free

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center, <http://marc.ucla.edu>--a good place to download free meditations

AudioDharma.org. An archive of talks from the Insight Meditation Center in Redwood California. All talks and meditations are free to download.

UMassIntegrativeMedicine.org. Our website. Has a media section with free meditations by students.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Heartwell Institute: Located on Pleasant Street. Offers meditation, yoga, and more.

Boundless Way Zen: Located on Pleasant Street. Offers multiple sits throughout the week, donation-based.

Center for Mindfulness: Home of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course, an 8 week program with discounts for students. Also hosts multiple talks throughout the year.

Integrative Medicine Oncology Initiative (IMOI): Free Thursday night wellness classes (5:30 – 6:30) open to all UMass-affiliated patients, family, and providers. Located on the 5th floor of the ACC behind the elevators.

NOT AS LOCAL RESOURCES

Insight Meditation Society in Barre: longer meditation retreats, some are open to beginners

Cambridge Insight Meditation Center: day-long meditation retreats, talks, and events

IMC Newburyport: day-long meditation retreats, talks, and events

LISTSERVS

-Email umassintegrativemedicine@gmail.com to be added to the IMOI listserv and receive reminder emails about free weekly wellness classes.

-Email Barbara.Grimes-Smith@umassmed.edu to be added to the Integrative Health Academic Interest Group listserv and receive emails about local integrative medicine events and meetings.

-Visit <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/Resources/AIG/> and click the link at the bottom of the page to sign up for the Mindfulness Academic Interest Group listserv to receive emails about local mindfulness events and talks.

◆My Practice Plan◆