

# Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians

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# Objectives

- ◆ Discuss the University of Massachusetts Promoting Resilient and Empathic Physicians Elective
- ◆ Demonstrate understanding of key teaching and learning methods
- ◆ Discuss applications of these teaching methods into activities at participants' institutions at home

# The Session

- ◆ Introduction of participants, goal setting and introduction of PREP Elective - **15 mins**
- ◆ Mindfulness-based meditation & mindful practice exercises with debriefing - **30 mins**
- ◆ Appreciative Inquiry narrative & debriefing - **25 mins**
- ◆ Whole Group Discussion of application of the workshop & its activities back at their home institution **20 mins**

# Rationale

- ◆ Burnout is highly prevalent at all levels of medical training
  - ◆ 45% of 3rd year students, 76% of IM residents, and 25-60% of practicing physicians
- ◆ Emotional exhaustion, depression and suicidal thoughts are higher among medical students compared to age-matched controls
- ◆ Classes teaching mindfulness and reflective writing to medical students have shown success in sustaining/increasing empathy and preventing burnout

# Definitions

## **Empathy**

The ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling



## **Resilience**

The ability to maintain personal & professional well being in the face of ongoing work stress & adversity



# The Elective

- ◆ **Six sessions, each 2.5 hours in length; designed to parallel developmental phases of Core Clinical Year**
- ◆ Introduction and Mindful Communication (May)
- ◆ Working within the Hidden Curriculum (October)
- ◆ Future Planning with a Present Mind (November)
- ◆ Improving Medical Outcomes (January)
- ◆ Dealing with Suffering (March)
- ◆ Sustaining Yourself and Sustaining your Practice (April)

# Mindfulness Exercises

**Mindfulness:** Nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment

**Mindfulness Meditation** is a western, non-sectarian, research-based form of meditation derived from Buddhist practice. It is a **form of meditation** designed to develop the skill of paying attention to our inner and outer experiences with acceptance, patience, and compassion.

◆ **Meditation Exercise**

# Mindfulness Meditation



# Mindful Practice Exercise

When practicing mindfully, clinicians listen attentively to patients' (*or their own*) distress, respond to emotions and suffering, recognize and avoid errors, refine their technical skills and make patient- (*or student*) centered decisions. They provide care with greater competence, clarity and compassion. They are attentive, present, curious, and adopt a "beginner's mind" when confronting challenging situations.

Mindful Practice, University of Rochester

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/family-medicine/mindful-practice.aspx>

◆ Values exercise

# Values

Your values for your third year medical student

# Values

Your team's values for your third year students (residents, attendings, nurses, etc.)

# Values

Your third year students, on their first day, thinking about the values for an ideal third year medical student?

# Appreciative Inquiry

“A process, philosophy, and life practice grounded in research demonstrating that focusing on what’s working and aspirations for the future achieves more and does it faster and more sustainably than solving problems.”

—Holman & Cato

## Assumptions

- ◆ In every society, organization, or group, something is working.
- ◆ Looking for what works well and doing more of it is more motivating and effective than looking for what does not work and doing less of it.
- ◆ The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences or changes the group in some way.
- ◆ Systems move toward what they choose to study or focus on.
- ◆ People have more confidence and comfort to journey into the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known). In other words, continuity is as important as change.
- ◆ The collective creation of a desired future is most powerful when it is based on the best of what already exists.

# The Hidden Curriculum

“Only a **fraction of medical culture** is to be found or can be **conveyed within those curriculum-based hours** formally allocated to medical students’ instruction. Most of **what the initiates will internalize** in terms of the **values, attitudes, beliefs, and related behaviors** deemed important within medicine takes place not within the formal curriculum but **via a more latent one, a ‘hidden curriculum’** with the latter being more concerned with **replicating the culture of medicine** than with the teaching of knowledge and techniques. In fact, what is ‘taught’ in this **hidden curriculum often can be antithetical** to the goals and content of those courses that are formally offered.”

Hafferty FW, Franks R. The hidden curriculum, ethics teaching, and the structure of medical education. *Acad Med.* 1994;69:861–71.

# Let's take a look at the water

There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, “*Morning, boys. How's the water?*” And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, “*What the hell is water?*”

# Reflective Writing: Narrative Assignment

- ◆ Think about time when you were on a rotation, in the hospital, or in the office setting where you found your values challenged AND you ultimately acted in a way consistent with your values.
  - ◆ Write about the event, or events, in a way that captures that event, your dilemma, and your ultimate decision.
- ◆ **FOR TODAY**-Listen to a story about a student encountering the hidden curriculum



# Reflective/Write-PROVE

**How would you debrief this the student?**

**How would you debrief this resident?**

# Updating Practice Plans

- ◆ Moving forward-Other mindful practice activities
  - ◆ Six breaths
  - ◆ Mindful walking
  - ◆ Mindful eating
  - ◆ Mindful stretching

# Challenges and Successes

## ◆ Challenges

- ◆ Difficult to schedule time during 3<sup>rd</sup> year given students' schedule variation and limited time overall
- ◆ Elective
- ◆ Variable attendance

## ◆ Successes

- ◆ Completion of 1<sup>st</sup> cohort taking elective
- ◆ Strong sense of community among group members leading to expansion of support network
- ◆ (currently analyzing pre- and post-course surveys about mood and stress)

# Ways to Incorporate PREP at your institutions?

Questions?

# Closing Meditation