

Relationship-Centered Care: Impact on Culture and Community in Medical Schools

Learning Communities in Medicine Conference
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
November 1, 2007

Penny Williamson, Sc.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine (Part Time), JHUSOM
Relationship Centered Health Care

Saying yes to the possible



Relationship Centered Care

RCC – Pew-Fetzer Task Force 1994

- Respectful collaborative relationships as foundation of humane and effective medical care
- Relationships between patients and clinicians, among members of interdisciplinary healthcare teams, between healthcare system and community, and relationship with self

Taking up the Challenge

“Movement in the direction of RCC in the life world of academic medicine would be galvanized if even one medical school/academic medical center could seriously undertake this kind of change process, document its journey, share perspectives with peer schools, and measure the impact of what it has done on the members of the academic community”

Tom Inui, MD
in Fetzer RCCI Grant

Case Study: Relationship Centered Care Initiative at Indiana University SOM

- Setting: IUSM
 - 2nd largest medical school in US
- Readiness for change
 - Formal curriculum: nine competencies in 1999
- Disconnect between formal and informal curricula
 - Formal competencies, including professionalism, self awareness and communication, not mirrored in the social environment
 - Students performed well but did not feel valued or enjoy experience compared to national data (AAMC GQ survey)

Relationship Centered Care Initiative at IUSM: 2003-2007 and continuing

- Goals:
 - To foster a more caring, respectful, collaborative culture throughout the entire medical school
 - To create congruence between informal and formal curricula (professionalism lived in everyday interactions)

Getting Started

- Assemble stewardship team
 - Tom Inui, Project Director
 - Rich Frankel, Led Research arm and Professionalism
 - Debra Litzelman, Assoc Dean for Medical Education
 - Dave Mossbarger, Program Coordinator
 - Penny Williamson and Tony Suchman, External Consultants
- Articulate the vision
- Start with appreciative intervention
- Share discoveries and invite others to participate
- Nurture ideas that work; let go of what doesn't work

What We Need is Here

Geese appear high over us,
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye,
clear. What we need is here.

~ Wendell Berry ~

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

Principles of Fostering Culture Change

- Being the Change
- Emergent Design
- Appreciative Focus
- Focus on Local, Everyday Behaviors

Being the Change

- Changing from Within
- Mindful Interactions with Others
- Commitment at the Organizational Level

Emergent Design

- Pursue a vision (e.g., Relationship-centered culture)
- Let specific path of implementation emerge
- View organization as conversation not a machine

Appreciative Focus

- Change what's wrong by paying attention to what's right (root causes of success)
- Call attention to existing competence and capacity
- Create hopeful, self-fulfilling expectation for positive change

Focus on Local, Everyday Behaviors

- Maintain or change patterns of relating
- Small disturbances in patterns can amplify and spread
- Ask: What would a relationship-centered approach look like?

Support from the Leadership: Being the Change

“As institutions we must “role model” what we say we expect of individuals. ...We (decided we) would be abrogating our responsibility if we failed to pursue culture change. We jumped with both feet...sometimes suffused with excitement over a conviction that we were doing the right thing; then..consumed with abject fear and trepidation that the proverbial Pandora’s box would erupt with who knows what consequences. We rode it out. “

Craig Brater, MD
Dean, IUSM

Calling for Change from the Inside Out

Keeping considerations of self and professional together permits us to see work as an expression of self, and professional aspirations for trustworthiness and virtuous action as aspirations of our own heart. In a field that demands as much of us as medicine, anything less than this integration of person and professional may be unsupportable in the long run.

Thomas Inui, MD

Stewardship Team

"We knew we must model what we were trying to be"

As a regular part of our work, we:

- **Met twice a month for several hours**
- **Explored and challenged our assumptions in a trustworthy setting.**
- **Supported each other during difficult times.**
- **Began each meeting with a poem and check in**
- **Reflected on our work together as a team**

Initial Intervention

- Discovery Team and Appreciative Interviewing
12 people conduct 80 interviews across campus
- Appreciative Interview Question

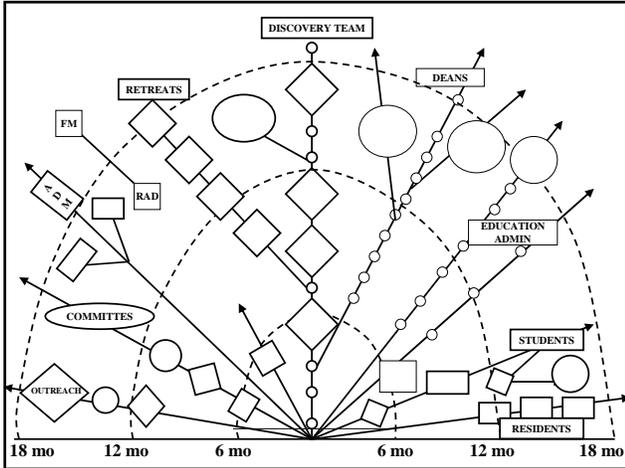
Partnerships are at the core of excellent healthcare and medical education. When relationships are respectful and responsive, each person is recognized as unique and capable, and feels valued and engaged. Think of a time at your organization when you experienced superb working relationships, a time when the way people worked together exemplified collaboration, respect, trust and compassion.

Bringing Discovery Interviews to IUSM

- Themes of IUSM at its best
 - Believing in the capacity of all people to learn and grow
 - The importance of connectedness
 - The importance of passion
 - The wonderment of medicine
- Presented themes and stories at Open Forum
 - Transparency, openness, invitation to join RCCI
 - 35 came, ½ joined Discovery Team

"When I realize how good we are, I can no longer be silent when I see someone acting unprofessionally."

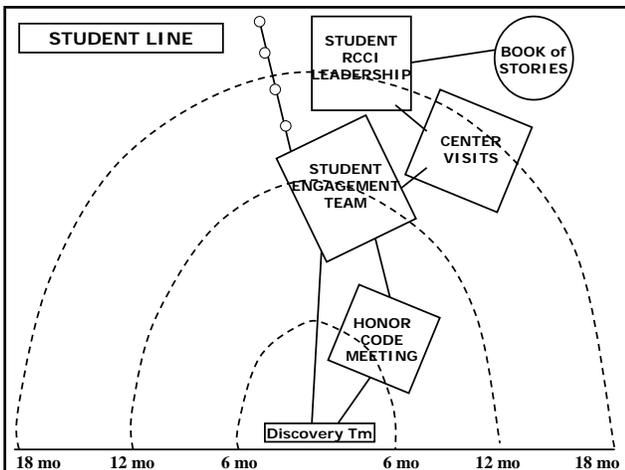
Faculty member, IUSM



Emergence: Ripples of Change

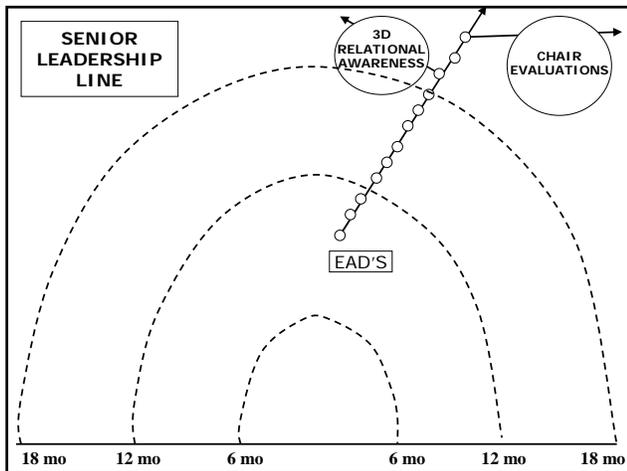
“We feel we are changing the nature of our conversations, asking how we can do this better.” – IUSM Faculty describing the RCCI, 2004

- Growing participation: from 6 to 1000
- Changing patterns of relating
- Creating communities of change agents
- New institutional procedures and programs
- Cultural artifacts
- National/International Interest



Emergence: Student Involvement

- Student interview initiative
- Student development of Honor Code
- Dean-appointed student council leadership position to promote RCCI and attitudes of “relatedness” in all campus activities



Emergence: Senior Leadership Involvement

- RCCI external consultants meet monthly with EADS for executive coaching
- Dean conducts data-rich, relationship-centered performance reviews for department chairs
- School-wide initiative in data-driven decision making designed and implemented to foster partnership, engagement and trust.

Emergence: Change Agent Development

- **Courage to Lead**
 - Year long program of professional renewal and capacity building “from the inside out”
 - Fosters self knowledge, authentic presence, and healthy relationships
 - Now in fourth cycle: 50 individuals have participated
- **Internal Change Agent Program**
 - 30 faculty nominated for 5 session, 18 hour program
 - Focus on organizational change theories, facilitation skills, and personal awareness

Changing Patterns of Relating:

Focus on local, everyday behaviors

- “Humanizing” standing committee meetings
- Statewide competency directors and coordinators become a “relationship-centered learning community”
- Increased use of paired interviewing, reflective narratives and appreciative interviews
- The Office of Medical Education and Curricular Affairs commit to mindfulness and intent in every personal interaction with the nine medical centers.

Cultural Artifacts

- “Mindfulness in Medicine” column in IUSM weekly newsletter
- Quarterly RCCI newsletter includes positive stories and news about activities.
- Student-created special RCCI section on the bulletin board in the student center.
- Students create and publish a booklet filled with art, stories, and poems created by IUSM faculty, residents, and students.
- Original book of student stories presented at White Coat Ceremony, with plans to update it biannually.

Evaluation

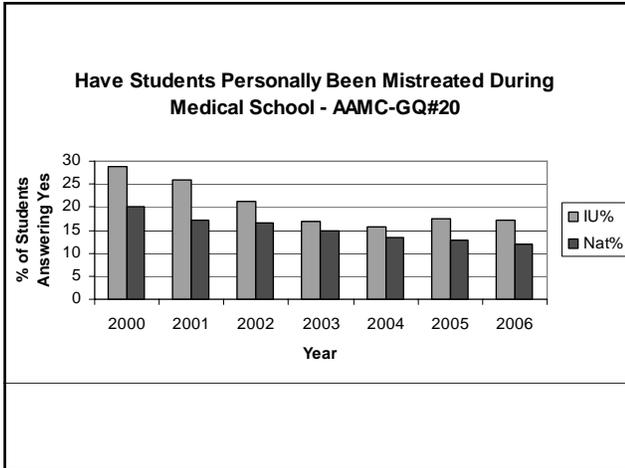
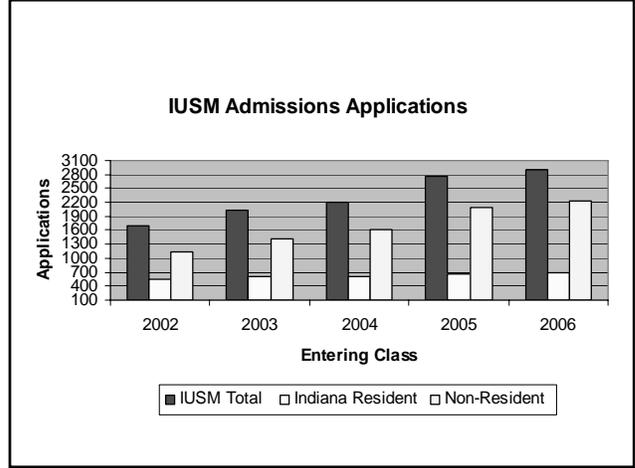
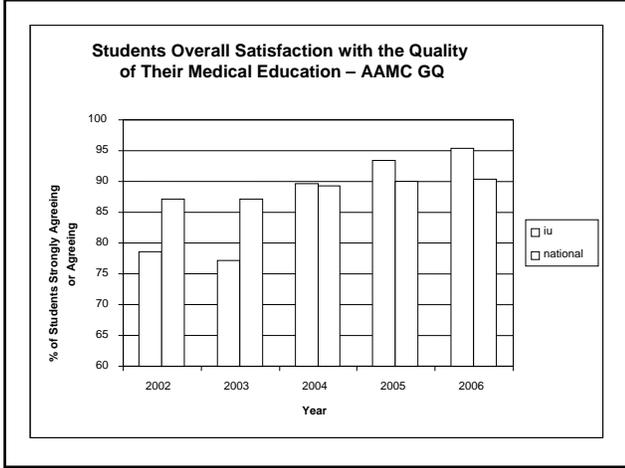
“RCCI is a crucial enabler, providing a framework and a methodology for setting up and facilitating the conversations which have had and are having such a broad impact on the school...There's a significant change from two years ago. People are talking and behaving differently.” – IUSM Dean, 2004

“I already knew most of these principles but I didn't always follow them. Now, there are so many daily reminders of the importance of relationship centered-care, I find myself being more mindful.”

Executive Associate Dean, IUSM, 2007

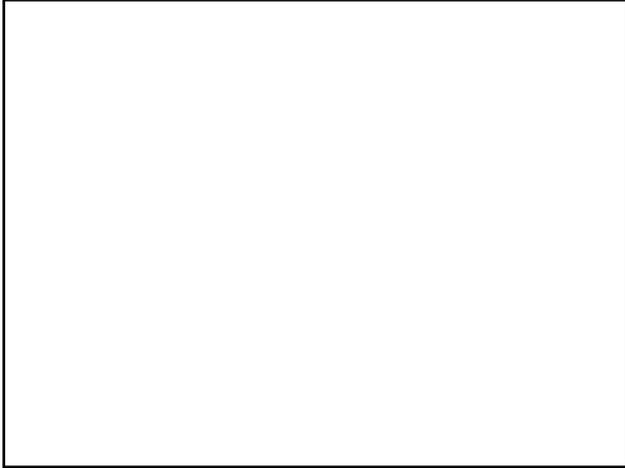
Evaluation

- External evaluator described noteworthy observations of positive change among students, administration, committees, residents and patient care: “a valid and reliable data set for understanding and assessing the inter-subjective reality of social and organizational life.”
- Evaluator observed impacts of the project on local hospitals and patient care facilities to determine the project's effectiveness in effecting change 'downstream', in patient care.
- External recognition and curiosity
- AAMC Graduation Questionnaire data and trends



References

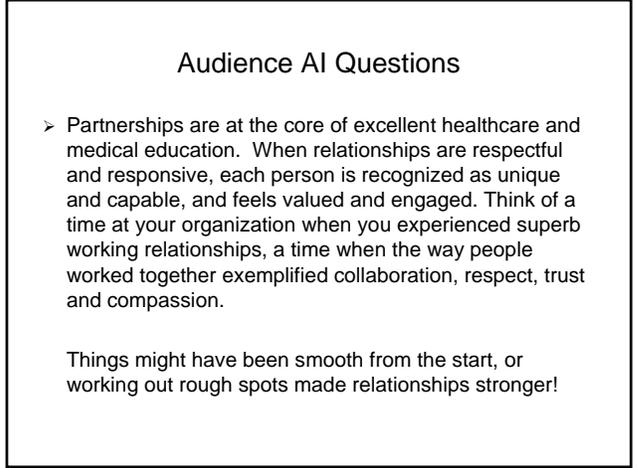
- Inui, T, A Flag In the Wind: Educating for Professionalism in Medicine, Report to the AAMC, 34 pp. February 2003.
- Cooperrider, DL, Srivasta, S. "Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life: Research in Organizational Change and Development." *JAI Press* 1987; 1: 129-169.
- Palmer, P, The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life, Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Suchman, AL, Williamson, PW, Litzelman DL, Frankel RM, Mossbarger DL, Inui TS, et al. "Towards an informal curriculum that teaches professionalism: Transforming the social environment of a medical school". *J Gen Int Med* 2004; 19: 501-4.
- Stacey R. Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics: The challenge of complexity. 3d ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Education, Ltd; 2000.
- Watkins JM, Moh BJ. Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. 2001.



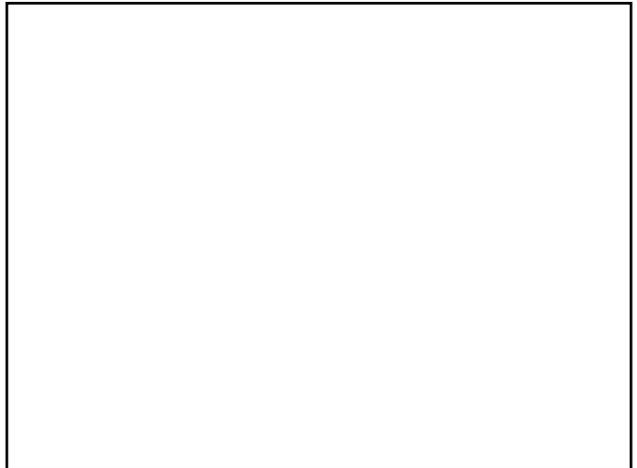
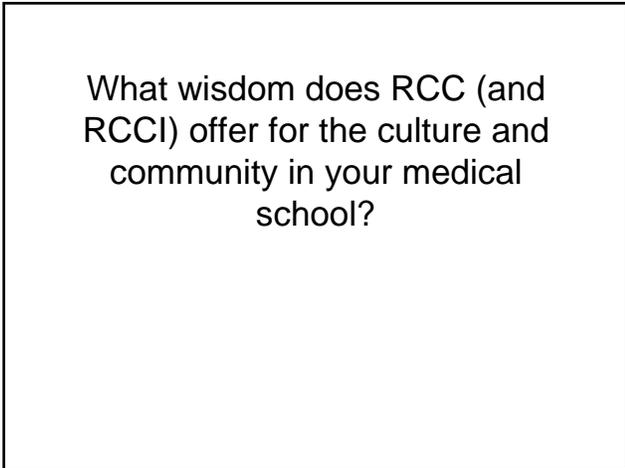
Audience AI Questions

- Partnerships are at the core of excellent healthcare and medical education. When relationships are respectful and responsive, each person is recognized as unique and capable, and feels valued and engaged. Think of a time at your organization when you experienced superb working relationships, a time when the way people worked together exemplified collaboration, respect, trust and compassion.

Things might have been smooth from the start, or working out rough spots made relationships stronger!



What wisdom does RCC (and RCCI) offer for the culture and community in your medical school?



Discussion

- Please write your questions on a card and pass them to the front. This is now an audience participation talk show!