

Title: Navigating emotion in the clinical encounter: Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cross-cultural techniques

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Project Description:

The proposed educational project will develop and evaluate the impact of emotion literacy workshops for members of the medical community.

I. Specific Educational Aims:

- 1) To increase clinicians' knowledge of the relevance of emotional literacy to both patient and provider outcomes.
- 2) To provide clinicians with new skills for emotion identification and emotion self-regulation.
- 3) To deliver cross-cultural and cross-gender communication tools for clinicians navigating emotional clinical encounters.

This project targets the following priority areas:

Collaboration: By providing training that synthesizes interdisciplinary data in order to inform care delivery across medical specialties.

Diversity and inclusion: By placing an emphasis on cross-cultural emotional nuance in order to provide clinicians with the skillset necessary to provide culturally-sensitive care.

Impact and sustainability: This course is designed to be integrated into ongoing medical instruction, both at Stanford as well as at other institutions, and will be offered as a series of stand-alone workshops that will be recorded and made available online.

II. Project Rationale:

Clinician responses to patients' affective cues are linked to care outcomes [1]. However, instruction on how to effectively identify and manage emotion in a clinical interaction is not a standard part of medical education curricula [2]. While high rates of burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and the sense of a loss of personal accomplishment [3], are reported across all stages of medical trainees, practicing physicians and nurses [4, 5, 6], there is evidence that emotional intelligence and emotional stability may be protective against burnout [7]. New curricular content is needed to provide clinicians with the skill set necessary to navigate the extraordinary emotional demands of practicing medicine.

Research shows that clinicians frequently do not accurately identify and appropriately respond to patients' emotional cues [1, 8], leading patients to omit further cues [9] at the cost of poorer patient outcomes. The objective of this project is to synthesize existing evidence to provide a set of empirically-grounded emotion training workshops.

At the conclusion of the workshops, participating clinicians should feel more confident in: (1) identifying and self-regulating their own emotion during challenging clinical encounters; (2) recognizing and containing patients' emotion; (3) effectively identifying emotional cues across genders and culturally diverse patients and; (4) understanding the role of emotion in patient outcomes.

III. Approach:

Content Development: The content of this training will be derived from a systematic review of current literature pertaining to the physiology of emotion, emotion perception, expression, regulation and interpersonal management. This literature will draw from diverse fields: neuroscience, psychology, medical education and communication science. After synthesizing results from the literature, we will seek input from subject matter experts in each of the four fields. Building on this data, we will create a set of three 60-minute workshops that respectively target:

- (1) The physiological basis of distinct emotions and their interpersonal function;
- (2) The presentation of emotion across genders, cultures, and patients with medical conditions that compromise affective expression (e.g., neurodegenerative illness); and
- (3) Communication techniques that are effective for acknowledging and containing emotion in a clinical setting.

Dissemination Plan: The workshops will be offered to the medical community, and will be recorded and made freely available online.

IV. Timeline and Plan for Implementation:

September 2018-December 2018: Curriculum Development

- Conduct trans-disciplinary literature review

January 2019-March 2019: Workshop Development

- Gather input from subject matter experts
- Revise content based on input from content experts

April 2019: Delivery of Workshop 1

- Deliver first workshop: Physiological basis of emotions & their interpersonal function

May 2019: Delivery of Workshop 2

- Deliver second workshop: Navigating emotion across cultures, genders, and patients with compromised expressivity

June 2019: Delivery of Workshop 3

- Deliver final workshop: Clinical communication techniques for emotion management

July 2019:

- Edit the three recorded workshops to provide online access to the workshops.
- Prepare manuscript detailing the process of the workshop content development for submission to a medical education journal.

V. Anticipated Work Product

This project will result in the development of a set of empirically-grounded emotion trainings for the medical community that can be accessed in two formats: in person as a stand-alone workshop or series of workshops, and online. These trainings will address the current lack of emotion training in medical education, and will provide the theoretical framework and practical skills necessary for clinicians to more effectively navigate emotion in clinical settings.

VI. Evaluation Plan: Knowledge and confidence assessments, administered both pre- and post-workshop training will explore the value of the content and effectiveness of the delivery method.

VII. Dissemination of results:

The workshops and online content will be offered to the medical community. An overview of the content of the workshop and the workshop development process will also be presented in the form of a manuscript submitted for publication in a medical education journal.

References

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