

Title: Code Connect: communication curriculum for healthcare providers to fight burnout

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Purpose: This quality improvement project aims to host a series of communication workshops at our county hospital in order to help providers feel more confident navigating moral dilemmas in medicine, which are some of the root causes of burnout.

Background: Healthcare worker burnout has a negative impact on overall well-being and job satisfaction. High-quality relationships between providers and patients as well as between interdisciplinary providers have a positive effect on burnout.<sup>1,2</sup> Providers face moral dilemmas in patient care every day, and these situations are a major contributing factor to burnout. Good communication skills are essential in navigating difficult situations to preserve relationships with patients and coworkers. Unfortunately, most providers do not receive adequate training in serious illness conversations. The core elements of effective serious illness communication include: assessing patient perspective, sharing information clearly, attending to emotion, eliciting goals and values, managing uncertainty, and shared decision-making. In an effort to improve mental health at the primary safety net hospital of Minneapolis, we will host a series of workshops for team members aimed at improving communication skills through structured didactics, teaching drills, and simulations that mimic real-world/bedside clinical practice.

Methods:

We will develop and present training sessions to an estimated 40 Physicians, Nurses, and Advanced Practice Providers. The first trainings will be skill-building workshops which will include skills of listening deeply, sharing information, recognizing and responding to emotion, and time management. Sessions will be held in 2-4 hour windows and can be delivered in flexible schedules to accommodate previously blocked educational time. After completing the initial training, we will have patient simulations requiring participants to utilize these skills. Pre- and post-survey data will be gathered to assess empathy, burnout, job satisfaction, and confidence around communication before and after our curriculum.

Conclusions: This project is currently in the “Do” phase of the IHI Framework Model for Improvement PDSA cycle. We have preliminary data from the pre-survey that indicates overall interest and excitement for this curriculum.

1 Fulmer T, Escobedo M, Berman A, Koren MJ, Hernández S, Hult A. Physicians' Views on Advance Care Planning and End-of-Life Care Conversations. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2018 Jul;66(6):1201-1205. doi: 10.1111/jgs.15374. Epub 2018 May 23. PMID: 29797314.

2 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; National Academy of Medicine; Committee on Systems Approaches to Improve Patient Care by Supporting Clinician Well-Being. *Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being.* Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2019 Oct 23. PMID: 31940160.