PROFESSIONALISM IN MEDICINE

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PROFESSIONALISM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define professionalism
- Describe key professional attributes

PROFESSIONALISM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe methods for teaching and assessing professionalism
- Describe the most common examples of unprofessional behavior

THE CLINICAL COMPETENCIES

- **Professionalism**
  - Cognitive knowledge
- **Patient care**
- **Communication skills**
- Practice-based learning
- Systems-based practice

PROFESSIONALISM

- Without question...the most important of the clinical competencies
- Most common reason for “failure” in residency training and practice

DISTRACTIONS THAT INTERFERE WITH PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- International events
- Professional liability crisis
- Declining reimbursements
- Web of bureaucracies
- Epic 😞
DISTRACTIONS THAT INTERFERE WITH PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Financial worries
- Time constraints
- Fatigue
- Physical illness
- Family stress

DEFINITION OF A PROFESSION

- Being in a profession means much more than simply getting paid for what you do!!

DEFINITION OF A PROFESSION

- Distinct body of knowledge
- Responsibility for advancing knowledge
- Responsibility for transmitting knowledge to the next generation

DEFINITION OF A PROFESSION

- Special code of behavior – a TRUE HIGHER STANDARD, a CALLING !!
- MORAL IMPERATIVE to put the people you serve above your own self interest !!

DEFINITION OF A PROFESSION

- "The great use of a life is to spend it on something that will outlast it."
- William James

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Humility
- Honesty
- Intellectual
- Personal
DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Responsible
- Reliable
  - Complete assignments in timely, accurate manner
- Accountable for errors
  - “Stuff” does not just happen

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Consistency
- Persistence
  - “When you learn to quit, it becomes a habit.”

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Preservation of BALANCE between home and hospital
- Attention to personal health
  - Physical
  - Psychological

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Altruistic
- Respectful
- Loyal

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Commitment to excellence, but not a rigid standard of perfectionism
- Commitment to self-directed learning

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Compassion, sensitivity, tactfulness
  - Patients
  - Trainees
  - Colleagues
PROFESSIONALISM
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

• Timely
• Specific
  • Suggestions for improvement
• Timeline for improvement

PROFESSIONALISM
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

• Private
• Focused on the specific behavior, not personality
• “Sandwiched” with praise for work well done

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

• Appropriate hygiene and personal appearance

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

• Intellectual curiosity
• Insight into personal strengths and weaknesses
• Maturity

DESIRABLE PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

• “You don’t make your character in a crisis, you exhibit it.”
• Mark Twain

TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM

• Almost everything you need to know about professionalism you should have learned in kindergarten and from mom and dad!
TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM

• We cannot change the basic personality of young adults, but we can modify behavior

TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM

• Lectures
• Seminars
• Role-playing exercises
• Directed reading
• Modeling of proper behavior
• One-on-one counseling

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

• We may not be able to define professionalism precisely, but we all recognize when it is lacking....at least in others.

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

• Single most common reason for failure in residency and practice
• Single most common reason for adverse academic action in clinical science curriculum

TOP 10 EXAMPLES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

• Dishonesty
• Arrogance – too great a sense of entitlement
  • In the work place
  • In social situations

TOP 10 EXAMPLES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

• Prejudice
  • Ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status
• Disrespectfulness
  • Patients
  • Coworkers
### TOP 10 EXAMPLES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- **Lack of accountability** for medical errors and administrative oversights
- **Fiscal irresponsibility**

### TOP 10 EXAMPLES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- **Lack of sustained commitment to self learning**
  - Poorly informed
- **Lack of due diligence**
  - Carelessness
  - Laziness

### TOP 10 EXAMPLES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- **Personal excesses** – substance abuse, gambling
- **Sexual misconduct** – with patients and coworkers
  - Most likely offenders – psychiatrists and obstetrician-gynecologists

### ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

- **Punctuality** – one of our greatest failings in medicine
- **Consistency in attendance** at conferences
- **Dress**

### ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

- **Respectfulness** in interacting with others
- **Respect for diversity**
  - Ethnicity
  - Lifestyle

- **Focus on modifying undesirable behavior, not changing an individual's personality**
ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

- Willingness to accept personal responsibility for outcomes
- Willingness to seek help when in difficulty – academically, technically, personally

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

- Communication
  - Patients
  - Family members
  - Co-workers
  - Dependability

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM

- Work ethic
- Attitude
  - Be part of the solution not part of the problem

PROFESSIONALISM CONCLUSIONS

- “Just do it!”

PROFESSIONALISM CONCLUSIONS

- Be nice!
- Be virtuous!
- Strive for excellence but accept imperfection!
- Do the right thing!

REFERENCES