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CORD Assembly, March 9th 2020

Starting From Scratch - Building the Culture in a New Residency Program

Narrative: New programs have the opportunity and challenge of building a residency culture from scratch. We will share lessons learned from building the culture in our 3 year-old program. We will explore the roles that leadership, faculty, and residents play in creating the culture, norms, and "feel" of a program.

Goals and Objectives:

- Objective 1: Understand the role of faculty and the first classes of residents in building the culture of a new program

- Objective 2: Understand potential pitfalls that can lead to problems in the culture of a new residency

- Objective 3: Develop a toolkit for building a residency culture that draws on the programs unique strengths.

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How to Create a Positive Culture within a Residency Program

1) Solicit (and act on) resident feedback. Listen to everyone's ideas. Each and every one of your residents' have at least one idea which can improve the program's culture
1) Recognize and commend hard work/celebrate wins
    a) Start off conference by sharing something positive that happened to a resident in your program. Encourage others to do the same.
2) Show gratitude
    a) Be specific about what it was and why it was helpful or important
3) Celebrate
    a) Publicly wish people happy birthday or congratulate other life events - engagement, marriage, children, accomplishments, etc.
4) Encourage positive thinking
5) Set the expectation that residents will take breaks during clinical shifts
6) Encourage fun
    a) Encourage residents to hang out during interview dinners, attend wellness events
7) Build a culture of transparency
    a) Explain decisions whenever possible
8) Help residents build a support system
    a) Program supported peer and faculty mentorship

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<u>Modifiable Barriers to Resident Wellness Chart: Academic Medicine 93(7):966-968, July 2018. (3)</u>

1. Unfriendly work environment
    a) Enable culture change by incorporating wellness themes at annual events (intern orientation, resident retreats) and monthly noon conferences
    b) Empower second/third year residents to be team leaders who support and nurture younger trainees every day
    c) Incentivize positive teamwork and communication among staff members (competitions, prizes, activity-tracking challenges, etc)
    d) Normalize the experience of "the inner critic" to combat personal insecurity and self-doubt
    e) Train residents in peer support
2. Unhealthy work environment
    a) Provide fresh and healthy food options
    b) Provide vegetarian and gluten-free food options
    c) Provide access to water, coffee, and tea in resident workrooms
    d) UPHOLD DUTY HOUR RESTRICTIONS
3. Lack of wellness initiatives
    a) Encourage formation of resident wellness groups, supported by program funding
    b) Improve awareness of and collaboration with hospital and residency leadership
    c) Provide education about avoiding burnout and teach concrete healthy coping strategies
    d) Collaborate among specialties to create a hospital-wide wellness initiative
4. Lack of space to recharge or reflect
    a) Create dedicated space for residents to practice self-care at the hospital
    b) Provide a quiet clean space in the hospital for residents only
    c) Encourage debriefing of tragic and traumatic events in resident-only spaces
5. Personal health-related behaviors
    a) Exercise: Provide free or discounted gym membership, on-site gym, and/or yoga classes
    b) Healthy food: Provide discounted or incentivized community-supported agriculture shares, improve hospital food
    c) Mental health: Improve access to formal mental health services/counseling; identify dedicated providers for hospital staff
    d) Health care maintenance: Designate time in the schedule for doctor and dentist appointments

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