

INTRODUCTION TO KINDNESS CURRICULUM

SLIDE 1 (Title) – Welcome to the Kindness curriculum.

Slide 2: Before we start, I'd like to put in a plug for you all to consider attending a free performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the UCI Department of Drama T Aug 28 7-11:00 on the main Irvine campus. Due to the efforts of Dr. Ralph Clayman, whom you'll be hearing from in a moment, we are able to offer this opportunity free of charge. We hope a large number of you will choose to come, as we thought about this as a bonding experience for the class.

Now it's true that the play is about, among other things, a fairy queen who falls in love with a donkey. What you might ask does that have to do with medicine? But Shakespeare was a master of the human condition. Everything that is in this play – love lost and won, class distinctions, humor, pathos, joy and sorrow – also happens at the patient's bedside and in the clinic. So the play may be more relevant to your medical education than you might think.

If you would like to attend, to ensure a seat, please respond today or tomorrow. After that, you will still be able to rsvp, but attendance will be open to all medical students and faculty at that point and seating will be on a first come-first serve basis.

SLIDE 3: OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S SESSION: This is what we will be doing today...

SLIDE 4 (ALASKA) – I'd like to start by telling a story about a physician's kindness. Since this story is not primarily my story, I want you to know that I have permission to share it. When he was 14, my son Josh developed symptoms of a genetic condition that affects the spine, some peripheral joints, and connective tissues. He was in severe pain that did not respond well to medication, and had to give up basketball which he loved and which he was very good at. Josh quickly grew depressed, and spent long hours in his room staring at the ceiling. He felt, understandably, that his life was over. Then one day he surfaced and told me he wanted to go to Alaska. He'd found an outward bound-type program that took teens into the Alaskan wilderness for 3 weeks. As his mom, I was appalled. This kid could barely walk, much less hike for miles. We consulted his rheumatologist, who rolled his eyes and suggested yoga. My son rolled his eyes and said yoga was for old people. We saw his orthopedist, who suggested a summer of intensive PT. This did not go over well either. Finally, we went to our family doctor, who'd known Josh since he was two. He listened to my son talk about all the wonders he expected to encounter in Alaska. Finally Josh said, "So what do you think, Dr. H?" Dr. H was quiet for a moment. Then he smiled and said, "Alaska is God's country. You haven't lived until you've seen Alaska." My son did go to Alaska. It was hard, especially when two girls ended up carrying most of the weight in his pack. But he made it to the end, and it gave him confidence that he had a future.

SLIDE 4 –WHAT IS THE KINDNESS CURRICULUM?

NOT trying to "teach" you to be kind – you are already kind 😊 Admissions committee chose you because you are of course brilliant and multitalented, but also because you are kind. It would be patronizing, even insulting to try to "teach" you to be kind.

What we are trying to do is create a culture at this institution in which kindness is an important value, and people think it is worthwhile to think about kindness and talk about kindness with each other.

So the kindness curriculum is simply a space in which you can think more deeply about

The role of kindness in clinical interaction;

What gets in the way of our being kind

How we can encourage ourselves and each other to act in ways that are kind through self-awareness and reflection

SLIDE 6: And to offer some specific skills to help maintain kindness, including nonverbal exercises to promote communication and teamwork; and mindfulness and lovingkindness meditation

SLIDE 7– KINDNESS CURRICULUM DETAILS

Human Kindness curriculum is the brainchild of Dr. Ralph Clayman who will be speaking to you momentarily

4 1.5 hr sessions MS1

4 1.5 hr sessions MS2

Emphasis is on active student involvement and clinical relevance

Almost all sessions incorporate someone who has been or is a patient

SLIDE 8 (RAINBOWS) - Of course, we all want to be kind, but...

Is kindness really worth 6 hours of your time? Is it too touchy-feely, too much rainbows and kittens? Although unlikely we can memorize our way to kindness, maybe we can practice our way in that direction. I want to emphasize here that I am saying “we” and “our,” “not “you” and “your,” because this is a project for all of us, teachers, doctors, students.

SLIDE 9 WHAT IS KINDNESS? - So what is kindness?

DYAD EXERCISE – ASK FOR A COUPLE OF DEFINITIONS OF KINDNESS

SLIDE 10 DEFINITION OF KINDNESS

Here are some dictionary definitions of kindness; as you can see Aristotle mentioned kindness as an altruistic virtue

SLIDE 11 KINDNESS IS AN ACTION

In contradistinction to related constructs, kindness emphasizes action

Kindness is an action, but also the attitude with which we do an action (“I’m so sorry for your loss.”)

SLIDE 12 BARRIERS TO KINDNESS

Even though we all want to be kind, sometimes things get in the way of our being kind

Depletion - Scraping the bottom of the barrel

Judgment - Not everyone deserves my kindness

Self-focus - Preoccupied with own concerns

SLIDE 13 DEVELOPING A KINDNESS PRACTICE

This is a perfect time to start developing a kindness practice

Be kind to yourself

Eat, sleep, spend time with people you like, do something that nurtures you

Gratitude journal

Be kind to others

Smile at someone

Do a very small gesture of kindness

Ask yourself in every interaction – What does this person need from me?

TALK WITH A DIFFERENT PARTNER ABOUT A KINDNESS ACTION YOU CAN COMMIT TO FOR A WEEK.

SLIDE 14 BUILDING KINDNESS

You can build kindness as you would build muscle mass – through daily practice

Slide 15 Shihab Nye poem – I think as you go through your medical school training, the doctors you admire most, the ones who will become your role models will be the ones who recognize that “kindness is the only thing that makes sense”

SLIDE 15 BE KIND

Think about how you will treat your patients with kindness in the future; think about how you will treat everyone around you with kindness on a daily basis starting today