

PRE-PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION: PATIENT-FAMILY-DOCTOR RELATIONSHIP

- I. Intro – Hi, I’m Dr. Shapiro, I’ve taught at the UCI School of Medicine for over 30 years, a lot of that about the patient doctor relationship. I understand that all of you are interested in one day becoming doctors or nurses or other kinds of health professionals. I hope for the next hour we can all have a conversation about what it’s like to be sick – seriously sick – how it affects the family, and what it’s like to take care of sick people.**

- II. So let’s think for a moment what it’s like to be sick. I hope none of you has ever been seriously ill, but if you have, think about that experience. Maybe some of you have had a family member, perhaps a grandparent, who has had a serious illness. Maybe a friend. If you are fortunate enough never to have personally known a very sick person, that’s okay. Use your imagination. Look at this painting, that was painted over 100 years ago by Pablo Picasso, a very famous artist of the 20th century, and look at the patient in the painting, and imagine what she might be feeling.**

- III. When you become a patient, several things almost always happen to you.**
 - A. Pain and suffering – what is the difference?**
 - B. Loss of control – when you are sick, often there are so many things you can no longer do; so many things you can’t control. What are some of these things?**
 - C. Loss of identity – how does being sick threaten your identity? (loss of roles, loss of relationships)**
 - D. Isolation – because you can’t do the things you used to, you become more isolated; friends may stop visiting; it may be harder to go out into the world**
 - E. Stigmatization – what does stigma mean? (a stain or blemish; a mark of disgrace); how is illness stigmatizing? (you have become flawed, imperfect, vulnerable)**

- IV. What is it like for the family when a family member becomes ill? This is a painting by the Norwegian 19th c. painter Edvard Munch, who also painted The Scream. It portrays his mother sitting by the side of his sister, who died when she was a young girl of tuberculosis, a now treatable and usually curable disease.**

- V. All families are different, but most families with a seriously sick member experience some variation of the following:**
 - A. Pain and suffering – distress over the sickness, fear of future**
 - B. Stress - caring for a sick family creates anxiety, uncertainty, loss of sleep, poorer self-care**
 - C. Problem-solving (fix the problem)**
 - D. Helplessness (if problem can’t be fixed)**
 - E. Support – providing emotional and physical support for the pt**

F. Commitment – staying the course

G. Adaptation – making adjustments to a new situation; depending on the circumstances, what might these adaptations be? (getting a job, quitting a job, becoming a care-giver, advocating for your family member with the medical community and others, adjusting to changes in the ill family member)

VI. The Doctor

This painting is by the famous 19th English court painter, Sir Luke Fildes. Although the painting portrays a country doctor treating a humble labourer's child, it was inspired by the illness of Sir Luke's eldest son Phillip, who was treated for typhus by a well-known London physician, Dr. Murray. How do you think the doctor is portrayed? Interestingly enough, Sir Luke painted this picture after his son had died; in other words, despite the care and ministrations of the physician, he could not save the child. Nevertheless, the painter was grateful for the attention and kindness the physician showed, and painted this in tribute to the humanity of the physician.

VII. What are the doctor's obligations to the family?

- A. Excellence in knowledge and skills**
- B. Commitment to patient - altruism**
- C. Honesty and clarity in communication**
- D. Understanding and empathy for patient's values and priorities**
- E. Humility – why is humility important?**

VIII. The Twisted Smile – reading

- A. The patient perspective**
 - 1. What is the patient feeling?**
 - 2. What is she most worried about?**
 - 3. Why does she ask her question?**
- B. The family member perspective**
 - 1. What is the husband feeling?**
 - 2. What choice does he make regarding his wife?**
- C. The physician perspective**
 - 1. How is the doctor feeling?**
 - 2. What do you think of the way he responds to the patient? (communication)**
 - 3. At what point was the doctor the “key player” in the patient's life?**
 - 4. What is the doctor's role now?**
 - 5. Why does he call the husband a god?**

IX. Summary

- A. Patients' lives often inexorably changed by illness**
- B. Patients/families must find new roles, new relationships, new meaning**
- C. Physician must know**
 - 1. when to apply his or her skill/knowledge**

- 2. when to step aside, appreciate the awe and wonder inherent in the healing process**