

ART OF DOCTORING PERSONAL PROJECTS

OPTION 1 – Self-Change Project: Increasing Compassion and Empathy

1. Identify a general focus: “I want to pay more attention to my patients”; “I want to listen better to my patients”; “I want to be a better patient advocate”
2. Operationalize your focus: “I want to do less of [behavior]”; “I want to do more of [behavior].”
3. Behaviors have to be related to empathy, compassion, caring, and other humanistic values, but also had to be measurable or observable.
4. Monitor the behavior for a week to establish a baseline.
5. Develop an intervention strategy to change behavior (ask 5 questions; wear a rubberband to remind yourself not to interrupt patient; take some breaths before interviewing a difficult patient)
6. Anticipate obstacles and resistance (too busy; doing this will slow me down)
7. Keep data for 2 week period
8. Summarize your results and what you learned (how did this project contribute toward making you a better doctor?)

OPTION 2 – Creative Project: Transformations

Using literature or the arts, develop an original creative project on the theme of transformation. This theme can be interpreted in many ways: How have you changed or grown since the beginning of the year? How has your understanding of medicine evolved? Perhaps you witnessed growth or transformation in a patient, or a resident, or attending. How might you portray this creatively?

Art of Doctoring Students' Personal Projects

Attitude/Behavior	Intervention(s)	Outcome
<i>Judgmentalness</i>		
1. Decrease judgmentalness toward patients	Paying attention to positive role models Rehearsing appropriate language	Shifted toward more respect and sensitivity in language
2. Treat all patients with equal respect	Focus on NHW patients Spend more time with them	Learned all patients can benefit from attention and explanations
3. Decrease impatience, judgmentalness toward patients	Have a non-HPI conversation with every patient Learn something personal about pt., and include in case presentation	Despite "eye-rolling" by attendings, result was improved pt. care
4. Decrease judgmentalness toward pts and other people	Identify something positive about person Be aware of right speech in all contexts Examine personal reasons that cause negative feelings Observe positive role models	Became more patient-centered
5. Decrease judgmental attitudes toward substance-abusing patients	Reframe negative thoughts Get to know patients on personal level	Became more empathetic and understanding
<i>Impatience</i>		
6. Decrease impatience, frustration in medicine and life generally	Ask parents for feedback about neg behavior Journalling, prayer	Increased patience at work and home
7. Be more patient with patients	Interrupt less, redirect less quickly Spend a specific amount of time with patient Ask pts. to rate adequacy of interaction	Pt. satisfaction increased from mean of 7 to 8; pts. reported their questions were answered Pts. seemed happier
<i>Focus on patients</i>		
8. Focus more on pts., less on case presentation	Write less during HPI Arrive earlier Do tasks sequentially	Shifted focus back to pts. Reduced multi-tasking

9. Increase "presence" w/pts	Keep journal of clinical stories	Not sure project helped
10. Resolve feelings of pity, helplessness toward dying patients	Avoid distancing humor Ask pts. how they are dealing with situation	Became more comfortable, more empathic with terminally ill patients
11. Increase playfulness with patients	Interact informally with pts. Make jokes	No information
12. "Caring" project for IM interest group	Give 3 rd yr students \$5 to do something nice for pt.	Students devised caring, thoughtful projects; Became more oriented toward service More positive re medicine

Communication Skills

13. Increase concentration on patient's story	Maintain eye contact Remind self to "focus" Active listening skills	No information
14. Be a better listener with patients	Write less Interrupt less	No information
15. Reconcile pt.'s agenda with dr's agenda	Not interrupting patient Focusing on patient Paraphrasing patient's perspective and concerns	Felt more present Improved ideas for treatment plan
16. Increase comfort talking about sensitive subjects with pts (bad news, sex, drugs)	Notice avoidance and work through it	Became more at-ease; Developed useful intro phrases Felt more competent
17. Improve patient education skills	Spend more time on education Find out what pt. knows already Find out what pt. wants to know Use cues as reminders to educate Ask patient to summarize Follow up with patient	Patients seemed more involved, included in decision-making, treatment plan
18. Learn more about pts' medical conditions	Spend more time talking to pts. about medical issues	Team appreciated additional information Pts. became better educated
19. Be more of a patient advocate	Be more vocal about pt. care; Communicate pt's needs to team	Felt more in touch with pt's feelings

	Observe positive role models	Better prepared to formulate treatment plan with team Increased confidence
<i>Work environment</i>		
20. Decrease anxiety about case presentations	Focus more on pts. Relax	Could think more clearly about pts.
21. Deepen connections with colleagues	Ask personal questions Have informal conversations Smile more Say loving-kindness prayer Avoid putting up walls	Experienced colleagues as real people Increased liking for colleagues Pts. got better care
22. Become less “invisible” on clerkships	Get to know team; speak up; express opinions; spend more time with patients	Felt more integrated into team Understood pts. better
23. Learn to speak up on wards	Identifying situations where could express opinions	Felt less out of control Less, intimidated, afraid
24. Personalize the work environment	Find out one new thing about staff, patients Use people’s names	Less stressed Insights into colleagues, patients Improved work relationships Better communication
<i>Personal, familial</i>		
25. Be a happier person	Smile more, express more Express more thankfulness Complain less	Enjoyed work more Enjoyed life more
26. Improve relationship with family	Communicate more often Identify more convenient times to talk	Increased friendliness, intimacy with family Happier at work