

EMPATHETICS MODULE 2 MANAGING DIFFICULT ENCOUNTERS: Small Group Discussion Questions

Instructions for Student Facilitator:

- 1) Make sure every student signs in
- 2) Choose two or three questions to discuss OR Make up your own discussion question
- 3) Write down key points from the discussion of each question on the accompanying sheet
- 4) Submit sheet to Yvette Warner

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- a) What can happen when you ignore addressing the emotional cues of the patient?
- b) What are the 4 components of emotional intelligence? (self-awareness; other awareness; self-management of emotions; relationship management). Why are these important?
- c) What are some useful self-management techniques? (recenter/be present, “black box” negative emotions, talk to a colleague, breathing technique; be curious not furious; avoid defensiveness)
- d) What are patient factors that contribute to difficult encounters? (higher # somatic complaints; more severe symptoms, worse clinical outcomes; lower functional status; higher utilization of healthcare; psychiatric illness). What are physician factors? (low tolerance for psychosocial problems; less clinical experience; low tolerance for intense emotions, such as patient anger; limited training in counseling patients; low job satisfaction; high personal distress; burnout). How can you use this information to anticipate and improve difficult conversations?
- e) How do you combine being empathic while setting limits about inappropriate patients’ requests? Role-play an example. (Pt wants MRI, dr does not feel it is indicated – paraphrase, acknowledge emotional intensity, ask open-ended questions, don’t argue)
- f) What is meant by a conflicting agenda and how can you resolve it? (Example – pt wants to talk about husband’s death; dr. wants to talk about her worsening diabetes)
- g) Why is it important to be self-aware of your own emotions? What are some situations that challenge clinician empathy? (When patients are dissatisfied with their care; when patients act angry or demanding; when patients criticize or diminish them; when patients manipulate them; when patients act helpless/dependent; when patients challenge the authority of the clinician or refuse to comply with treatment recommendations). Choose one of these and role-play a successful interaction.
- h) What are the 4 Fs and how can they be helpful in a difficult clinical encounter? (Foster an alliance –help pt feel you are on the same side, not opponents; focus on the patient’s viewpoint; facilitate empathy; finish with a plan). Role-play an example.
- i) How can you manage your emotions in a difficult encounter? (recognize it is a difficult situation; take a breath; be curious about pt’s perspective and emotional state; avoid becoming defensive; take a minute to brainstorm with a colleague)

GROUP #:

SIGN-IN FOR SMALL GROUP

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

5. _____

10. _____

Question 1:

Main Points:

Question 2:

Main Points:

Question 3:

Main Points: