STRENGTHENING FAMILY-PHYSICIAN COMMUNICATION: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RESIDENT EMPATHY IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH FAMILIES
INTRODUCTIONS

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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN YOUR PROGRAM?

- Program Director
- Associate Program Director
- Coordinator
- Chief Resident/Rising Chief Resident
- Other medical educator
- Resident
OBJECTIVES

- Understand the importance of attunement in empathic communication with families
- Develop strategies for self-regulation to utilize in stressful communication scenarios
- Explore empathic communication and its effect on family-centered communication
- Contrast listening strategies and evaluate the impact of each on family-centered communication
- Consider how to integrate family-centered communication training into your training curriculum
FAN FAMILY COMMUNICATION TOOL

- Read parent’s communication cues
- Understand the optimal time to offer emotional support, ask questions, or give information
- Support parent/child communication
- Organize patient encounters efficiently to understand and address parent’s concern
- Develop self-awareness and physician wellness strategies to help manage challenging interactions
- Communicate empathically and efficiently in clinical encounters
RESIDENT COMMUNICATION TRAINING

- Train residents in the use of FAN Family Communication Tool
- Residents use FAN Family Communication Tool in clinical encounters
- Reflective supervision
- Integration into overall pediatric curriculum
“When you do something that doesn’t work, you have an opportunity to learn something and grow closer.”

T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. April, 2014
“When someone feels truly understood, ‘known,’ the attunement that occurs creates a space where it is possible to try new ways of interacting,” Siegel & Hartzell, 2003 in Lewis, 2011, p. 446.

- Worries of a parent:
  - Is my baby all right?
  - Am I a good enough parent?
ARC OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Before Entering Room
   Take a moment to pause, breathe, and clear your mind

2. During History Taking Period
   What has it been like for you, taking care of your child with this concern?

3. End of History Taking Period (Before Physical)
   Just want to check in with you. Are we getting to what you're most concerned about?

4. End of the Visit
   What would you most like to remember from our time today?
Mindful self regulation: CALMING

Creating, Sustaining, Regaining a Calm and Engaged Presence

Resident Reflection: “This process has made me aware of emotions that can come up during a visit, and I feel more prepared for them.”
Mindful self regulation: CALMING

What gets you “stirred up”?
Mindful self regulation: CALMING

How to do you feel when you are in balance vs. out of balance?

- Body Sensations
- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Behaviors or Expressive Actions

What are some strategies you use to stay regulated in stressful communication scenarios?
Mindful Self Regulation: Strategies

Breathing

Grounding
Mindful Self Regulation: Strategies

Self-Talk

Breathe and ask one more question

Imagery
What is your MSR strategy?
Empathic inquiry: FEELING

Listening with Acceptance to the Parent’s Feelings

Resident Reflection
“I knew I was using the FAN when the mother told me that this was the first time she felt listened to”
Empathic inquiry: FEELING
Empathic inquiry: FEELING

1) What do you think about the difference between empathy and sympathy?
2) When have you felt the pressure to silver-line something?
3) Considering empathy vs. sympathy, how do you think you might adjust your communication style in the future?
Empathic inquiry: RESIDENT REFLECTIONS
Resident Reflection

“I use this on my obesity follow-up visits. I try to get a sense of what about obesity concerns the child or family: risk of diabetes, bullying, acanthosis...this helps me target my education to that particular issue rather than giving the same education to everyone. It feels like I am doing a better job”
PAIRED LISTENING ACTIVITY
Collaborative exploration: THINKING

- What did it feel like to seek help using each strategy?

- What did it feel like to give help using each strategy?
Collaborative exploration: RESIDENT REFLECTIONS
FAN: RESIDENT REFLECTIONS
OUR STUDY

- 3-hour initial training
- Use of FAN/ARC on clinical encounter weekly w/reflection tool
- Monthly group vs. individual mentor sessions x 6 months
- Reflective supervision
- 1-hour booster training
- Initial results are promising!
  - 2nd study using standardized communication scenarios underway
- Sponsored by an APPD Special Projects grant
1. **Arc of Engagement**: Looking at the ARC of Engagement graphic, which of the following pieces of the ARC were you able to use during this visit?

   - 1. Take a moment to pause before entering
   - 2. Ask parent “What has it been like for you taking care of your child with this _____ (concern)?”
   - 3. Check in with parent (“Are we getting to what you’re most concerned about?”)
   - 4. Ask parents at the end what was most important to them
   - 5. Match parent’s cues to the core process needed in the moment

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2. **FAN Family Communication Tool**: Looking at the FAN graphic below, please mark with an x the two core processes that you used most during this visit.
1) What communication skills training do you currently use in your program?
2) Would communication skills training using the FAN be helpful in your program?
3) What are some barriers to implementation?
4) If you are interested in FAN training for your program, what format would be most helpful (ie., train the trainer vs. web-based training)?
5) What would you most like to tell us about this training?
Questions?
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