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INTRODUCTION

- Facilitating our medical students' character development is critical to their professional identity formation and professionalism
- Reflecting and writing on opportunities to employ character traits in the Clinical Learning Environment (CLE) may protect against moral injury and burnout.

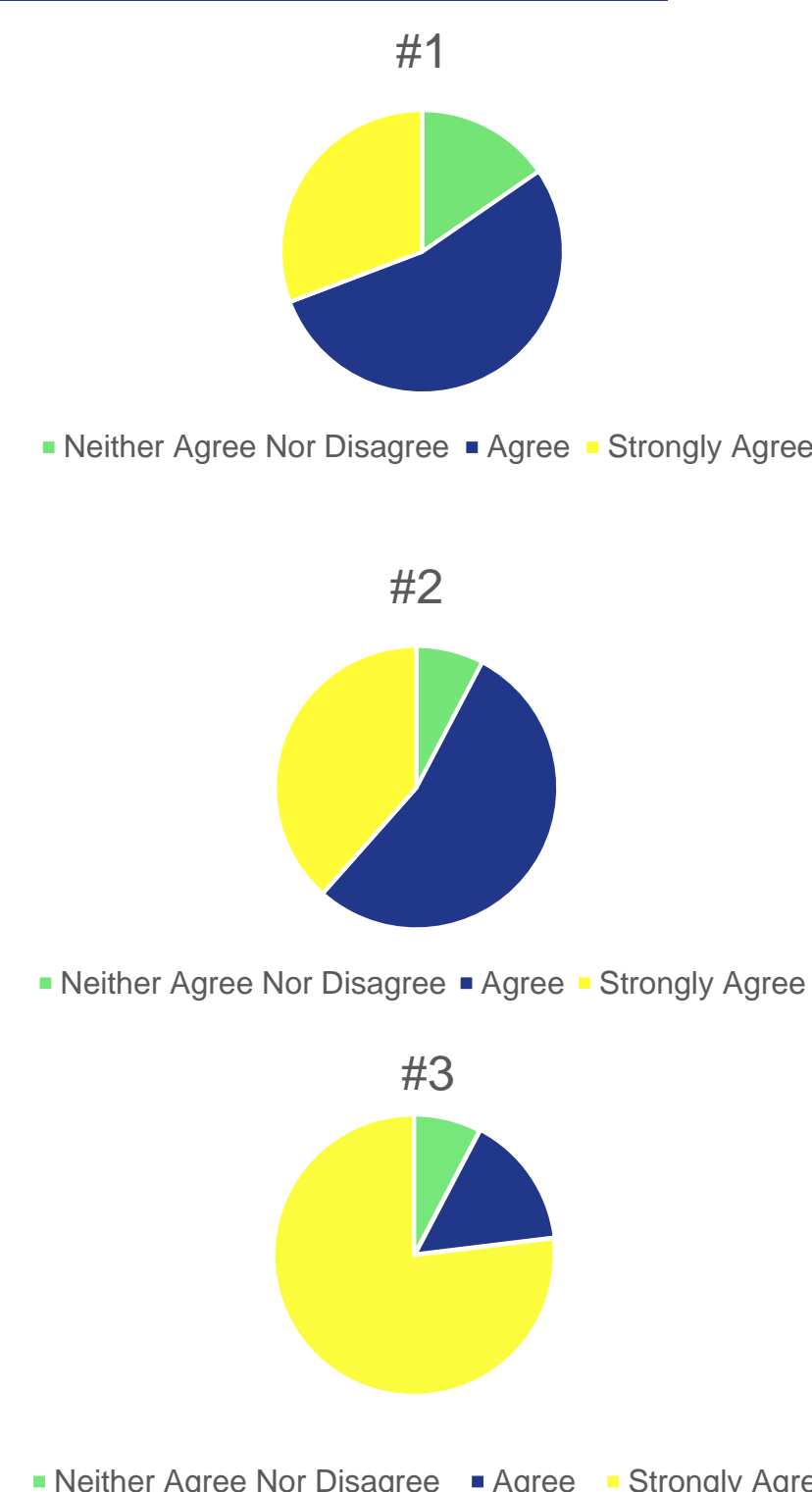
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Fourth-year medical students in a humanities elective wrote reflections on courage in the CLE by answering these prompts:
 - What does courage in medicine mean for you?
 - Think of a person who exemplified courage in your clerkships. Describe how this person "lives" courage.
 - Describe a missed opportunity to use courage you witnessed in the CLE. How might courage have looked in this situation? What might have changed if courage was employed?
- Faculty-facilitated small group discussions included:
 - Reading the narratives aloud
 - Reflecting on similar experiences
 - Identifying key themes
 - Describing the impact of these narratives.
- Key ideas from the small groups were then discussed in the large group.

RESULTS (1)

Student satisfaction = 4.85/5 (5 = excellent)

- #1: "My perspective of courage in medicine has changed as the result of this session"
- #2: "I am more likely to employ courage in the CLE as the result of this session."
- #3: "I would welcome additional opportunities for reflection and narrative on the application of other character traits in medicine"



Medical students found reflection, narrative, and small group discussions exploring character moments in the clinical learning environment valuable and encouraged expansion.



The Kern Institute seeks to transform medical education by advancing character, competence, and caring.

RESULTS (2)

Reflective Narrative Themes

- What does courage in medicine mean to you?
 - Admitting when you're wrong or need help
 - Advocating for patients, self, and the ideals of professionalism
 - Standing up for patients even when it's difficult
 - Staying true to yourself despite outside pressures
 - Facing uncertainty and fear
- Courage exemplars?
 - Patients, peers, teachers, interprofessional team members
 - Speaking up when change is needed
 - Responding professionally to unprofessional behavior
 - Setting boundaries
 - Participate in difficult conversations
 - Facing illness and death with grace
- Missed opportunities to employ courage?
 - Witnessed learner mistreatment or microaggressions
 - Pursuing difficult conversations with patients/families
 - Patients labeled as "difficult" for some reason by team
- Future opportunities to employ courage in the CLE?
 - Being vulnerable with teammates
 - Speaking up in challenging situations
 - Praising patients' courage
- Most thought a longitudinal expanded curriculum for all students would be valuable but identified time as a barrier

NEXT STEPS

- Implement character reflections and narrative for:
 - Additional character traits (begun)
 - Larger groups of students (done)
 - Longitudinal character development curricula (begun)
 - Faculty development
 - Interprofessional teams
- Explore the relationship between character traits, character moments, professional identity formation, and professionalism
- Explore concepts of psychological safety and practical wisdom in character development activities