Utilization of the DISC Assessment Tool to Elucidate Communication Styles in an Effort to Improve Communication Skills and Resiliency for Medical Providers and Trainees

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Background

- Development of communication skills is a relatively new area of the medical literature, however there are emerging standards in teaching and disseminating best practices in difficult conversations from a variety of specialties.
- These studies include broad differences in training level from student to faculty.
- There exist a paucity of evidence relating to using character traits evaluated by standardized character or behavior assessments in tailoring communication skills training.
- The DISC behavior assessment provides information on behavioral characteristics using a survey tool.

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that use of DISC assessment will provide insight into personality and communication styles and therefore will improve communication skills and empathy.

Methods

- Prior to palliative care elective rotation
  - Learners take DISC profile
  - Complete pretest
- First week of rotation
  - Palliative care faculty present difficult case scenarios
  - Highlight communication challenges
  - Didactics on communication basics
- End of rotation
  - Post test survey including resiliency measures

Results

Results in progress as project is pending IRB approval.

Conclusions

- Current literature lacks evidence of communication training that uses standardized character trait evaluations
- Interest and support among palliative team for use of standardized character trait evaluations in facilitating communication skills
- Full results and conclusions not realized during one year project time frame

My Entrepreneurial Mindset

Curiosity

Communication skills training: Competency
  How do we facilitate learning about difficult conversations tailored to individual learners?

Communication and Empathy: Caring
  Can we improve both content and caring by highlighting character and behavior traits?

Improving Skills: Resilience
  Can personal mastery of difficult conversation skills improve learner resilience?

Connections

Creating Value

- Knowledge:
  - Elucidating communication styles to improve skills
  - Relationship of communication skills to resiliency
  - Improving medical education
    - Adds self knowledge component by assessing character and behavior traits
    - Adds another approach to teaching difficult conversations