LONGITUDINAL COACHING FOR DEVELOPING CHARACTER IN MEDICINE

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Background: Medical schools are increasingly utilizing learning communities and coaching to facilitate medical student personal and professional development. The Medical College of Wisconsin's Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education was established in 2017 to nurture authentic expressions of good character in medicine that enable caring and competence in the service of patients. The purpose of this study is to incorporate character development into a faculty coaching program for medical students.

Methods: Developed pilot program of longitudinal coaching consisting of:
- 1 faculty + 3-4 medical students
- Voluntary participation
- Group meetings
  - Every month
  - Sharing experiences
  - Discussing the meaning, importance, and cultivation of character in their professional lives
- Individual meetings
  - Every other month
  - Review academic/clinical performance
  - Develop/revise individual learning plans
  - Character building exercises:
    - Transitions worksheet
    - VIA character survey
    - Character moment reflections
- Faculty development
  - Every month
- Program evaluation
  - Annual surveys of students/faculty
  - Interpersonal Reactivity Index and coping skills
  - Student academic performance
  - Maslach Burnout Inventory scores
  - Professional Identify Essay results

Student Results
- Responses from 60% of participants

Character Traits Students Reported as Enhanced
- Honesty (86%)
- Perspective, Wisdom (82%)
- Gratitude (82%)
- Curiosity (79%)

Growth Mindset Development
- Coach helps me become aware of emotions that influence my behavior
- Coach helps me recognize personal feelings
- Coach helps me take a closer look at my thinking habits
- Coach stimulates me to take responsibility for my own learning
- Feel like you and your coach are responsible to each other
- Coaching relationship represents a commitment from both you and your coach
- Trust your coach to help you navigate your learning experiences
- Work with coach to select, organize, and interpret information
- Work with coach to set specific measurable
- Develop shared agenda with your coach
- Accept weaknesses or challenges your coach helps you understand
- Learn about own goals, values, and preferences

Discussion: The increasing use of coaching and learning community programs allows a focus on identify formation and professional development. Incorporating activities and exercises specific to character development allow for a unique approach to guide students through their training. This pilot program shows great promise for longitudinal medical student coaching as a means to explicitly incorporate character and professional identify development into undergraduate medical education.

Significance: This pilot program tests the hypothesis that longitudinal coaching programs are an effective means of achieving medical student character and professional development. Initial feedback has been very positive.