



Team Wellness Strategies for Palliative Care Programs

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Background

In the past three years, the Cedars-Sinai Supportive Care Medicine (SCM) program has undergone unforeseen turnover, restructuring and significant expansion. As part of the FY16 goals, the team created a **Wellness Strategic Plan** to address:

- Team’s structure and function.
- Team’s morale, wellness and self care.
- Program’s sustainability and growth.

Methods

- Pre-retreat 1:1 interviews and small group discussions to identify key points of individual and team challenges.
- An in-depth review of staffing and volumes.
- 2 ½ day retreat that included all members of the SCM team, key leadership and staff from Cedars Sinai Medical Center, and nationally recognized palliative care consultants.
- Post-retreat sub-groups assigned to further develop key strategies and planning for each category for FY17.

Results

Developed four strategies for promoting team health in the following categories:



Subgroups assigned to further develop each category for FY17

Examples of accomplished tasks:

- 1. Team Service Standards: Streamline of consult triaging.**
 - The triage RN is responsible for triaging consults. Each morning the team discusses their schedule, and capacity for new patients.
 - Triage RN and other team members proactively communicate with referring providers to set service expectations and to determine urgency.
- 2. Interdisciplinary Function & Practice:**
 - Recognizing the significant growth of the team, a third social worker was hired for FY17.
 - Scheduled administrative time was established for social workers.

3. Self-care: “Code lavender” Process.

- Code lavender can be called to alert an individual or the team when a clinician is in professional or personal distress.
- Once a code is called the team will determine how they can support the clinician (i.e. Discussing the case, taking a break, coverage for patients, etc.).

4. Self-care: Individual Self-care goals and planning.

- Led by the team chaplain, each team member identifies their plan for self-care by answering a questionnaire which is reviewed monthly during the team’s reflection sessions.
- The team created a “buddy system” to support self-care.
- During daily morning huddles, the team completes self-assessment ratings and identifies stressors.

Conclusions

- The interventions implemented by the team resulted in practical changes which is anticipated to increase team morale, promote better self-care and improve service function and flow; all of which contribute to a decrease in burnout and help maintain program sustainability.
- The FY17 team goals include further development of the program’s wellness strategic plan, and measurement of impact of the interventions.