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“Funny Money: Using Behavioral Economics And Improv To Achieve Goal-concordant Patient Care”

Category:
Collaborating with Decision-
Makers to Improve Patient Care

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Scan for a condensed slide set about medical improv and behavioral economics in action!



What We Know:

- Palliative medicine providers help patients and families navigate the waters of decision making and choices regarding treatment options
- Discussing advance care planning (ACP) is a delicate task
- Conversations are dynamic in nature, subject to going off script
- Many “soft skills” [self-awareness, confidence, validating differing perspectives, identifying social cues, empowering others] aren’t taught in typical medical and post-graduate curriculums
- There is not much attention on how biases can affect patient/surrogate decision making

What We Did:

- Designed a two-part curriculum module for our learners, faculty, and staff
- First – an interactive session focusing on cognitive biases and the psychology of decision making, based on principles of behavioral economics
 - Defined and identified cognitive biases and explored how they manifest in real life, as well as in patient/surrogate decision making
 - Defined a nudge: guiding decisions towards a stated goal **without** limiting choice
 - Lastly, identified methods to gently nudge decision makers towards decisions that meet stated goals by overcoming these biases
- Second – a two hour, in person workshop guided by a professional improv instructor to learn and incorporate improv rules and techniques into dynamic conversations
 - Participants engaged in exercises to build self-awareness, to identify and act on social and disrupting cues, and how to skillfully advance conversations to achieve a productive end

What People Said:

Exercises on non-verbal communication taught how to be present/active listening, and that *how* we say something is often more important than *what* we say

“Yes, and...” exercises showed how to build a shared story with participants, while “Yes, but...” exercises showed how things can shut down

Understanding anchors can alter how we present things; carefully dictating what is medically “appropriate” or “normal” can have a drastic effect on chosen therapies