Communication Skills Training in Multi-specialty Clinical Fellows:

Smoothing Tough Conversations in ‘High-stakes’ Situations

Felicia Hui, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor, Palliative Care
Stanford University School of Medicine
CORE TEAM

• Josh Fronk, DO
• Merisa Kline, MHA
• Cyrena Torrey Simons, MD
• Barbette Weimer-Elder, PhD RN
WORKSHOP AIMS

• To create a safe environment for acquiring and practicing communication skills for new clinical fellows

• To apply and demonstrate effective use of communication skills in difficult conversations with patients and families

• To increase self-awareness and professional satisfaction
Inclusion of multiple specialties hoped to simulate the real-world working environment
Didactic
Core communication skills

Training
Small groups with roleplaying

Debriefing
Integration into daily practice
DIDACTIC

Teach fundamental skills used in common high-stakes situations:

• Building a relationship

• Responding to emotions with empathy

• Navigating awkward and/or difficult moments
TRAINING

Two hours

Standardized patients (SPs)

Vital Talk framework

Oksana Latysheva, thenounproject.com
vitaltalk.org
TRAINING FORMAT

• Fellows practiced newly taught skills with SPs

• SPs reacted based on the fellows’ skills levels

• Multiple time-outs and positive reinforcement were used

• Video-recorded for future review
DEBRIEFING

• Reflection on roleplaying session

• Discussion of what went well and what didn’t during roleplaying
The skills and tools I learned in the workshop will be helpful in my work.

I will use the skills and tools learned today in my daily patient care.

Over 90% of responses were ‘strongly agree’
STRENGTHS

• Structured roleplay/practice

• Safe environment

• Standardized patients
WEAKNESSES

• Length and frequency

• Anxiety-provoking

• Standardized patients/case
MOVING FORWARD

Balancing quality with efficiency