

### Session objectives

1. Recognize the importance of the learning climate in optimizing trainee learning, sense of belonging and well-being
2. Use continual, deliberate self-reflection to improve the learning climate
3. Identify and employ actions, words and behaviors which positively impact the learning climate.

**If you forget everything else, just remember to: *be kind, be transparent, provide autonomy as able, model humility and curiosity***

#### Scenario 1: Meet the team

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| <p>You are starting on an inpatient clinical service in which one trainee (resident) has known the patients for a few days. It is the first day on the service for another trainee (student). You are about to introduce yourself when the resident's pager goes off. They read the message and say, "Looks like we should start rounds, are you ready to head upstairs?" The student says, "That reminds me, I need to go get my pager." Then they both stand and look at you...</p> | <p>How do you respond?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Turn around and head back home</li><li>B. "Uh, OK, let's go see the patient. I'll tell you my name on the stairs."</li><li>C. "Do we have a minute for introductions, or is there someone we should go see right away?"</li><li>D. None of the above...</li></ol> |
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What would you ACTUALLY say in the scenario above? If time was not an issue, what would you say or do to welcome learners to the clinical environment?

DISCUSS!

Meeting trainees for the first time is the BEST opportunity you have to set the tone for the learning climate you intend to foster. Trainees make QUICK decisions about the learning climate around them, and these decisions can be durable. Some things to consider:

- Identify yourself and your role, how you want to be addressed [do you prefer a formal or an informal address from trainees? If you have a preference, why is that your preference?]
- Describe your teaching style, how you give feedback, that it's OK if they don't know things

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## Learning Climate Worksheet

- Ask for their names and use them! Ask for first and last name (you don't want to be in the room with a patient and not seem to know the name of the trainee helping to taking care of them)
- Always share about yourself **before** asking others to share - "I would be happy to hear something about you to whatever extent you'd like share."
- Consider asking questions that don't seek details about identity or status, such as "what is the most fun thing you did recently?" rather than where they went to school, residency etc.
- Make an explicit statement to invite trainees to ask questions
- Work with the learner to establish goals and expectation – more Clinical Teaching Certificate sessions coming!
- Ask about how learners would like microaggressions addressed in the learning environment. (ie, address in the moment at the bedside or later outside the room? You address it? Let trainees address?)

### Scenario 2: Providing autonomy

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| <p>You are attending in the ED, working with a trainee who has been on the service for over two weeks. You have heard that the trainee feels like they are not getting enough autonomy. A patient comes in after having wiped out on their dirt bike on a surface covered with tiny, sharp rock shards. Multiple shards are imbedded under their skin. You and the trainee are assessing the patient when the nurse pulls you away to attend to a decompensating patient. The student says, "I can take care of this – I'll numb them up and take the rocks out. I've done it before."</p> | <p>How do you respond?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. "Go for it!"</li><li>B. Pretend not to hear them and head to the other patient.</li><li>C. "Walk with me and tell me what the steps are for the procedure."</li><li>D. "Sorry – I'll need to be there; we can do it together after this patient's stabilized."</li></ul> |
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What would you ACTUALLY do in the scenario above?

What challenges do you have in your clinical setting in providing autonomy to learners?

What strategies do you currently have for how you can include trainees in the work, even if they cannot do certain tasks or are not ready to make decisions independently?

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### Learning Climate Worksheet

Learners highly value autonomy, and provision of autonomy has a very positive effect on the learning climate. However, “autonomy” means different things in different situations, and must vary based on the imperative of patient safety and the learner’s level of competence. Some considerations:

- You can ask a trainee “what would you do here” (you don’t need to actually let them do that thing if it's unsafe). Before doing this, set the stage that it is a safe place to “take a wild guess”-- we won’t let anything bad happen to patients. Ideally this should not be done in front of patients or at the bedside. You can also ask or allow them to make lower stakes decisions (which med would you choose, how to adjust a med, which antibiotic to use, what instrument to use, what order to do things in).
- When asking questions, work “up” the level of expertise- don’t ever go “down” the level of expertise. For example, if you are not sure of the trainees level of knowledge, rather than asking “which isoform of PPAR do thiazolidinediones activate,” start with, “what are some options for treating diabetes.”
- When things are too busy/fast paced/high stakes and is not safe to give autonomy in a particular clinical situation, describe what you are doing as you are doing it or use a debrief later. Don’t forget the trainee or allow them to feel forgotten.
- Allow for differences in style- something may not be EXACTLY how you would do it. If it isn’t UNSAFE, or leading to an unacceptable variation in care, let them do it that way.
- Some great examples from our message boards last year:
  - “In emergency radiology, we check the initial images on the CT scanner for every trauma scan to look for serious injuries which need immediate attention and to evaluate whether delayed phase images are needed. Instead of just sending the resident to do it and assume they were competent, I started by going to the scanner along with the resident so that I could explicitly state my search pattern and what pathology I am looking out for. The next time I let the resident take control and had them say out loud what they were looking for and why. Then by the third time I asked the resident if he felt comfortable going to the scanner alone and reassured him that I was right around the corner if he felt unsure about anything.” -Michael Flowers
  - “Be transparent: at the beginning of each surgical procedure for which I have a trainee, discuss two points. #1 ask them what they want to get out of the case and what they feel the most important part is for them to participate in and #2 specifically discuss what portions of the case they will do and which I expect to do. Then after the case, provide just in time feedback and ask for feedback from them.” - Clare Richardson
  - “I work with medical students on their newborn medicine rotation. The goal is for them to become proficient at performing this examination. My intervention aimed at improving transparency was to explicitly state how we would achieve this proficiency:(1) the first few examinations, I will go first, performing parts of the newborn exam and then having the student follow, (2) then, for the next few examinations, I will have the student go first, performing parts of the examination, followed by me, 3) and finally, I will have the student perform a complete newborn examination independently, and then I will confirm/repeat the exam afterwards.”- Jim O’Callaghan

**Scenario 3: Responding to error**

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| <p>A patient is admitted to your team with a GI bleed, but it is very challenging to draw their blood. A trainee is unsuccessful even after using ultrasound guidance. The patient's vitals are stable and at 5:00 pm the trainee signs the patient out to the night team, requesting that they perform the blood draw "if they have time." The trainee does not inform you of the lack of a hematocrit check prior to leaving for the night. In the middle of the night, a rapid response is called for hypotension and tachycardia. The patient's hematocrit is finally resulted at 12.</p> | <p>What do you say on morning rounds?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. "This is an example of exactly what not to do when you have a sick patient."</li><li>B. "Well I hope you're happy, they almost died."</li><li>C. "Tell me what happened with this patient."</li><li>D. None of the above</li></ul> |
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What would you ACTUALLY do and say in the scenario above?

What challenges have you had with errors in the clinical training environment, and what have you done to maintain a safe and welcoming learning climate?

Trainee errors (or suspected errors) can be challenging to respond to. It can be tempting to want to assign blame in these situations, feel anger, fear, or sometimes guilt. Even in these emotional situations, it is important to consider ways in which to maintain a positive learning climate. General ideas for a constructive response include:

- Support the trainee with debriefing, considering next steps, learning from this event
- Start with an attitude of inquiry and curiosity about what happened
- Focus on "what" happened rather than "why" during initial debriefing
- Give specific, forward-focused feedback for trainee based on debriefing
- Use the opportunity to emphasize team learning focus and value of teamwork
- Consider what you might have done in this situation in terms of the learning climate: Create a learning focused environment to reduce the fear of asking for help or calling to help trouble-shoot, discuss next steps

**Scenario 4: Modeling humility**

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| <p>You are working with a trainee in clinic during a particularly busy day. The trainee has a lot of questions, and doesn't hesitate to ask them. Earlier in the day you saw a post-discharge follow-up patient together, and the trainee had looked at you quizzically when you didn't know when the patient's newly implanted CardioMEMS device would need to be removed. You are now seeing a patient together for diabetes follow-up – the trainee says, "I can never remember, which isoform of peroxisome proliferator-activated receptors do thiazolidinediones activate?"</p> | <p>How do you respond?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. "I have no idea what you're talking about. I don't know what any of those words mean."</li><li>B. Pretend not to hear them and head to the next patient.</li><li>C. "Great question – I do not know. I'm going to look it up during my admin time!"</li><li>D. None of the above.</li></ul> |
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What do you actually do when faced with scenarios in which you do not have the answer?

Are you comfortable telling trainee's "I don't know"? Can you think of a time you did not model humility or a growth mindset that you wish you could do differently now? How could you approach the scenario differently to model humility?

**What is one new way that you will foster a safe and welcoming learning climate learning for all learners you work with?**

One message board favorite last year was to look things up together with trainees.

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## Learning Climate Worksheet

### Looking for some scripting? Try these:

**TABLE 1** Creating Psychological Safety in Medicine: Guiding Principles and Suggested Language Using Case Examples

| Psychological Safety Leadership Task #1: Setting the Stage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| Case Example 1: New student joins the clinical team for a month-long rotation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Guiding Principles and Conveyed Messages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Suggested Language                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Frame the Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frame the student's role and specific tasks within the team.</li> <li>• Review the learning objectives specific to the clinical learning environment.</li> <li>• Encourage students to identify related, individual learning goals.</li> </ul> <p>Emphasize the Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the teaching intent behind your actions as an educator.</li> <li>• Explain that it is important to identify and recognize knowledge gaps to learn.</li> <li>• Explicitly state the importance of learning for all team members.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>I think this setting is a good place for students to learn the skills of A, B, and C.</p> <p>Your role on the team will be X, Y, and Z, and my goal for you at the end of the rotation is [expected level of understanding or competency]. What specific goals do you have for the rotation, and how can I help you achieve these?</p> <p>I ask a lot of questions and give a lot of feedback to everyone on the team. This is so I know what I can teach you while you are here. It's always OK if you don't know an answer. Everyone is here to learn, including me.</p> <p>The feedback I give is to support growth towards independence for learners at every level. My main goal is for everyone to learn as much as possible and to enjoy their time here, even if you aren't going into pediatrics.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Psychological Safety Leadership Task #2: Inviting Participation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Case Example 2: A student asks you a question to which you don't know the answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <p>Model Humility and a Growth Mindset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge gaps in one's own learning and highlight the role of practice for building competency.</li> <li>• Actively seek input from group members.</li> </ul> <p>Provide Autonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make intentional choices about patient care opportunities so that students can demonstrate skills and autonomy.</li> <li>• Allow opportunities for varying degrees of autonomy that are in line with their stage of development.</li> </ul> <p>Use Inquiry to Build Knowledge, Not Highlight Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show curiosity and ask "why" questions to promote critical thinking.</li> <li>• Refrain from asking questions based on knowledge recall.</li> <li>• To avoid placing a student in a position where they may feel humiliated for not knowing an answer, consider directing questions to the group.</li> </ul> | <p>I don't know the answer to that question. Do any of you have ideas? Let's look it up together.</p> <p>What has been the experience of other team members?<br/>Learning X took me a long time, and after 10 years as a pediatrician, I'm still working on it.</p> <p>Patient A's exam has several common findings associated with illness B. Let's have you see that patient today. Do what you can based on what you know, and I will help to finalize the plan.</p> <p>Now that you have seen the patient, what are your recommendations? If you don't know, that's okay. Let's start with concerns that you have identified. You go first, and I can add some tips based on other cases that I have seen.</p> <p>Can anybody tell us why we see these exam findings in a patient with disease C? [rather than asking an individual student: What are the 3 classic exam findings in patients with disease C?]</p> <p>Tell me why you think medication Y may be useful in treating this patient's symptoms?</p> |
| Psychological Safety Leadership Task #3: Responding Productively                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Case Example 3: A student proposes a treatment plan you think is not clinically indicated                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <p>Express Appreciation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge what is "right" about the answer.</li> <li>• Work towards understanding where the suggested plan diverged from a more appropriate plan by asking questions.</li> <li>• Provide a decision-making framework and clinical rationale for the preferred plan.</li> </ul> <p>Destigmatize Failure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer feedback and recommendations that are based on direct observation and oriented toward next steps.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Nice presentation and good work committing to a plan.</p> <p>I know it can be hard when there are so many issues going on. I think you are right; we need to treat X with Y intervention.</p> <p>Can you tell me more about how you chose Y intervention?</p> <p>I can see how you chose Y intervention. I would usually choose Z intervention here because [provide your own clinical reasoning and decisionmaking framework].</p> <p>One resource I find helpful for X is [point towards specific reading or skill practice opportunity].</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

From McClintock, AH; Kim, S; Chung, E. Bridging the gap between educator and learner: the role of psychological safety in medical education. *Pediatrics*. 149 (1)

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Learning Climate Worksheet

Please fill out an evaluation before you leave the workshop today:



[https://uwsom.sjc1.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV\\_ewVSmn1ZeP1YuZE](https://uwsom.sjc1.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_ewVSmn1ZeP1YuZE)