



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Curricular Affairs

The Cup of Coffee Conversation to Promote Professionalism

General Faculty Meeting

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“Although episodes of disruptive behavior are not common, either are they rare”

(Hickson, Pichert, Webb, and Gabbe, 2007, p. 1041)

- Developed at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine as a supportive infrastructure for “addressing unprofessional/disruptive behaviors.”

Four graduated interventions:

1. Informal conversations for single incidents
2. Nonpunitive “awareness” interventions when data reveals patterns
3. Leader-developed action plans if patterns persist
4. Imposition of disciplinary processes if the plans fail

(Hickson, Pichert, Webb, and Gabbe, 2007, p. 1040)

Cup of Coffee Conversations to Promote Professionalism

- 72-78 % never have a reported professionalism issue
- 20-25% have a single reported lapse; most of these self-correct after their first “Informal” Cup of Coffee Intervention
- 2-3% have repeated lapses and require increasing levels of intervention:
 - Awareness
 - Guided
- A few require “Disciplinary” Intervention



Data

Between November 2013-February 2017, 148* Professional Conduct Comment Forms received:

- 56 regarding medical students (38%)
 - 13 exemplary (23%)
 - 43 lapses (77%)
 - 16 medical students referred to the Professional Support Team (PST) (29%)
- 41 regarding residents and fellows (28%)
 - 12 exemplary (29%)
 - 29 lapses (71%)
- 40 regarding attendings and faculty (27%)
 - 11 exemplary (28%)
 - 29 lapses (73%)
- 14 regarding other health care workers, support staff, and housekeeping (9%)
 - 8 exemplary (57%)
 - 6 lapses (43%)

*Several reports concerned more than one individual (e.g. physician and nurse)

The Role of the Messenger

- The Messenger is the *peer** who delivers the message to the person who had the lapse
- Messengers deliver initial “Informal” and secondary “Awareness” Intervention conversations
- Each conversation lasts from 3-5 minutes

*Peer= Attending to Attending; Basic Science Faculty to Basic Science Faculty; Fellow to Fellow; Medical Student to Medical Student; Resident to Resident; Support Staff to Support Staff

What the Messenger does *not* do...

- The Messenger does not attempt to “fix” the problem.
- The Messenger does not advise/counsel.
- The Messenger does not engage with “pushback.”



Cup of Coffee Process

1. Professional conduct comment form is received.
2. Professionalism Program (PP) reviews the professional conduct comment form.
 - If it is an exemplary comment, a commendation letter is sent to the individual named.
 - If it is a lapse, the PP ranks the lapse according to a rubric.
3. The PP determines if the lapse is appropriate for a Cup of Coffee conversation
4. The messenger schedules the Cup of Coffee Conversation with the identified individual.
5. The messenger shares the report in a private conversation with the individual.
6. The messenger completes a debriefing report.
7. Debriefing reports are tracked for Cup of Coffee completion.

Cup of Coffee Conversation Debriefing

Date of Conversation: _____

Starting Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Messenger Name: _____ Receiver Name: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Brief Description of Lapse in Professionalism: _____

1. How would you characterize the receiver's receptivity to this conversation?
 - a. Eager/Willing to make changes
 - b. Receptive/Interested
 - c. Reserved
 - d. Indifferent
 - e. Frustrated/Defensive
 - f. Angry/Hostile
2. Did the receiver try to offer an explanation for the behavior? If so, summarize.
3. If you had any difficulties delivering the message, please describe (e.g. pushbacks: deflection, dismissal, distraction or other):
4. Do you have any feedback/suggestions to help improve this process in the future?
5. Additional comment or concerns:

Cup of Coffee Conversations for Professionalism Update

- 13 Messengers trained to date
- Dispatched four messengers in the past month
 - 1 Medical Student
 - 1 Resident
 - 2 Faculty



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Q & A

