

Family Medicine Clerkship

Module on Suffering

GOALS

1. To augment medical student insight into patient suffering.
2. To develop skills in the care of patients who experience suffering.
3. To help students identify their own responses to working with patients who are suffering.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this clerkship students will:

1. Gain a vocabulary for discussing patient suffering.
2. Reflect on suffering as it affects patients, families, caregivers and healthcare professionals.
3. Learn to share thoughts and feelings about working with patients who are suffering.

METHODS

1. Read the required articles related to this module.
2. Identify a patient encounter scenario in which you witnessed patient suffering and write a one-page reflection on your experience with this patient. Briefly describe what happened and how you experienced the event. Identify questions you have about:
 - a. Your experience with this patient.
 - b. How to respond to suffering patients in general
 - c. Your personal reactions when encountering suffering.
3. Share and discuss your reflection with the course coordinator or a designated preceptor at the clerkship.

RESOURCES

Required Reading

Cheng A. Running behind to move forward. *Fam Med* 2016;48:736-737.

Epstein RM, Back AL. Responding to suffering. *JAMA* 2015;314:2623-2624.

Recommended Reading

Cassell EJ. The nature of suffering and the goals of medicine. *N Engl J Med* 1982;306:639-645.

Egnew TR. Suffering, meaning, and healing: challenges of contemporary medicine. *Ann Fam Med* 2009;7:170-175.

Gunderman RB. Is suffering the enemy? *Hastings Ctr Rep* 2002;32:40-44.