Monday Memo – February 20, 2018

Professional Development

Steve Martin received board certification in Addiction Medicine as of January 2018.

Presentations

- The following faculty presented at the February STFM Conference on Medical Student Education in Austin, Texas:

  Frank Domino: “Manual Medicine in Allopathic Education”
  Lisa Gussak, Phil Fournier, and Anthony Lorusso: “Physician, Heal Thyself: Dealing with Substance Use Disorders in Medical Students”
  Lisa Gussak: “Learning with Lactating”
  Mary Lindholm, Bob Baldor, Frank Domino, and Karen Rayla: “Grade Inflation and its Effect on Family Medicine Interest and Residency Rank Lists and Preparedness”

- Dennis Dimitri was invited to present Grand Round to the Tufts Medical Center Department of Anesthesiology February 8th. He presented: “Update on the Opioid Epidemic: Might Safe Injection Facilities be Part of the Solution?”

WELLNESS MOMENTS FOR THE MONDAY MEMO

A Practice in Your Pocket: The Three-Step Breathing Space

During the ups and downs of any day, it can be helpful to have a quick practice that can serve as a reset button. The three-step breathing space is such a mindfulness practice – it can be done in as few as three seconds, without anyone knowing you are doing it, or you can take longer. I use this practice throughout the day – for example, when I receive an unpleasant email, before public speaking, or even in moments when I am feeling giddy with joy; in any of these moments, it reminds me that I have a body and a breath, and not just a mind full of thoughts. If you want to experience it now, Mark Williams, from the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, leads a “three minute breathing space” here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOne1P0TL8

As demonstrated in the video, it can help to conceptualize this brief practice as having an hourglass shape – the awareness starts wide, narrows, and widens out again; I will outline the steps here, with credit to Nancy Bardacke, Eluned Gold, and the above Mark Williams video. Remember that you can take as long or short as you’d like for each step:

STEP ONE (“What is Here?”)
Coming into this moment, by asking yourself “what is here?... what thoughts?.... what feelings?... what body sensations?” Resisting the temptation to want to change what is here, but just noticing what is here, because it’s already here.

**STEP TWO (“I have a breath.”)**
Now narrowing the focus of awareness to this very breath, in this very moment. Seeing if it’s possible to shine the flashlight of awareness on one complete in-breath, noticing the pause between the in-breath and out-breath, and paying attention for one complete out-breath. Not trying to change the breath in any way. In fact, letting go of trying, and just paying attention to the breath, however it is, in this moment.

**STEP THREE (“I have a body.”)**
Now expanding the awareness around the breath to include the body as a whole, as though the whole body were breathing. Sitting (or standing) here, complete, just as you are. Opening the eyes if they’ve been closed, moving into the next moments of your day.