

**Advances and Innovations in Endoscopic Oncology and  
Multidisciplinary Gastrointestinal Cancer Care**

# Everyone Communicates but Few Connect: Incorporating Empathic Communication as a High Impact Medical Intervention

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# Disclosures

- We do not have any relevant financial relationships.

*This presentation and/or comments will provide a balanced, non-promotional, and evidence-based approach to all diagnostic, therapeutic and/or research related content.*

# Cultural Linguistic Competency (CLC) & Implicit Bias (IB)

## STATE LAW:

The California legislature has passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1195, which states that as of July 1, 2006, all Category 1 CME activities that relate to patient care must include a cultural diversity/linguistics component. It has also passed AB 241, which states that as of January 1, 2022, all continuing education courses for a physician and surgeon **must** contain curriculum that includes specified instruction in the understanding of implicit bias in medical treatment.

*The cultural and linguistic competency (CLC) and implicit bias (IB) definitions reiterate how patients' diverse backgrounds may impact their access to care.*

## EXEMPTION:

Business and Professions Code 2190.1 exempts activities which are dedicated solely to research or other issues that do not contain a direct patient care component.

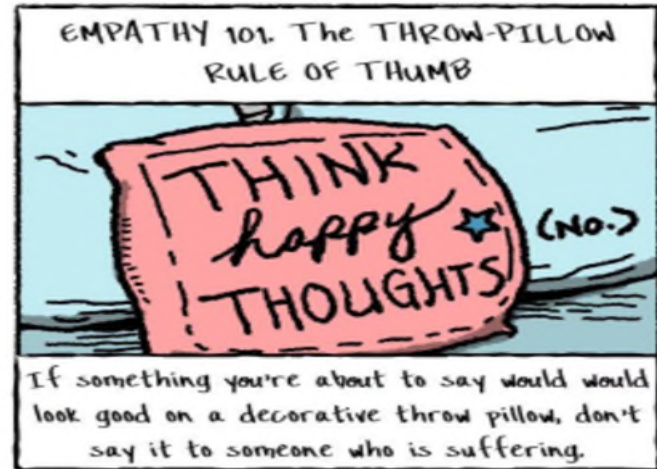
## ***The following CLC & IB components will be addressed in this presentation:***

- *Enhancement of communication skills to earn trust across diverse populations/backgrounds*
- *Increase meaningful conversation so as to reduce bias*





# What is Empathy?





# Neuroscience of Empathy



## Mirror Neurons

Type of brain cell that fires both when an individual performs an action and when they observe someone performing the same action.



## Empathy networks

Mirror neuron system, insula, anterior cingulate cortex, and prefrontal cortex  
Work together to process emotional cues, perspective-taking, and the regulation of one's emotions in response to others



## Emotional contagion

Individuals can “catch” the emotions of others. This process involves the automatic mimicry of facial expressions, vocal tones, and body language, leading to a shared emotional experience



## Theory of mind

Ability to attribute mental states to oneself and others is known as Theory of Mind. This process is crucial for understanding and predicting the thoughts, intentions, and emotions of others, contributing to empathetic response



## Oxytocin and Vasopressin

Neuropeptides are often referred to “love hormones” and play a role in social bonding and empathy

# Neuroscience of Empathy

- Developmental Aspects
  - Influenced by genetic and environmental factors
- Cultural and Individual Differences



# Empathy in Medicine

ChatGPT 3.5 ▾



**You**

I have cancer.



**ChatGPT**

I'm truly sorry to hear that you're going through this difficult time. A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and it's important to prioritize your well-being. Here are some steps you may consider:

**1. Consult with Your Healthcare Team:**

Reach out to your oncologist or healthcare team to discuss your diagnosis, treatment options, and any questions you may have. They can provide you with more specific information based on your case.

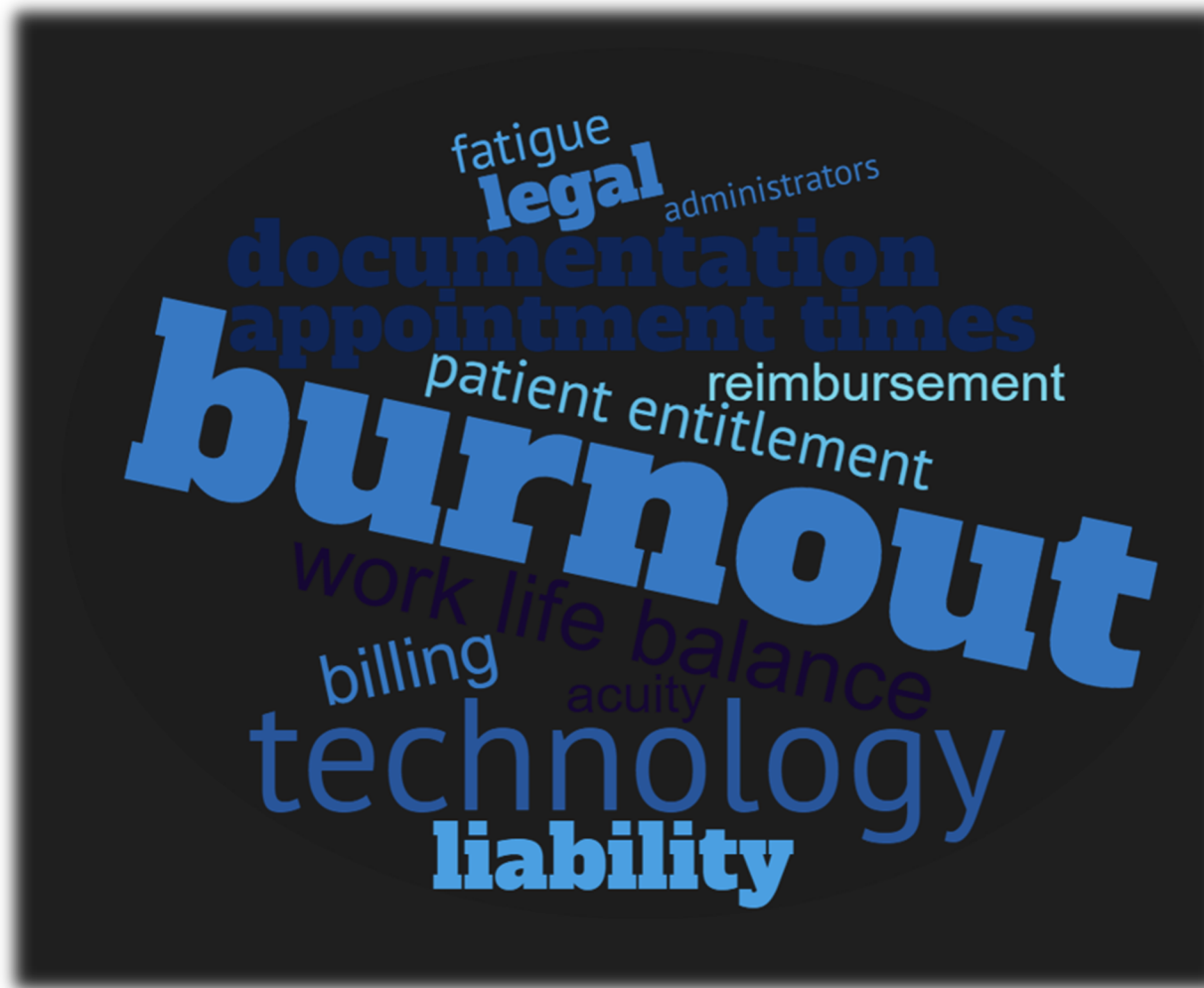
**2. Seek Support:**

Share your diagnosis with loved ones and friends who can offer emotional support. Consider joining a support group or seeking

Message ChatGPT...



# Barriers to Empathy





# The HOW

- Start with “self”
    - Mental and emotional space
    - Physical space
      - Positioning, body language, tone, and affect
  
  - Communication tools/phrases
    - NURSE
    - I worry/wish/wonder/hope.....
    - Tell me more.....
-

# NURSE- Phrases that acknowledge emotion

<b>Naming</b>	"You look sad today." "You look angry."	In general, naming the emotion turns down the intensity
<b>Understanding</b>	"This helps me to understand what you are thinking"	Shows that you acknowledge the emotion, but don't have to understand everything.
<b>Respecting</b>	"I can see that you have really been trying to follow our instructions."	You have done a great job with this.
<b>Supporting</b>	"I will do my best to make sure that you have what you need."	A powerful statement of support.
<b>Explaining</b>	"Could you share more in what you mean by that.....?"	Asking a focused question prevents this from being too obvious.



# Facilitate and share understanding

	Example	Notes
<b>Tell me more</b>	"Tell me more about...."	Use when not sure what someone is talking about (rather than jump to an assumption).
<b>Ask-tell-ask</b>	"What do you think about...." "Here's what the tests show" "Does that make sense...?"	Information transfer
<b>I wish/I worry statements</b>  <b>I hope/I worry</b>  <b>I worry/I wonder</b>	"I wish I could say that chemo always works. I worry that the burdens of chemotherapy may be greater than the benefits."  I hope that this line of chemotherapy provides you more time with your family. I worry that the side effects associated with it may be burdensome.  I worry that your decision to pursue more treatment may cause additional side effects, I wonder if we can talk about other options.	Enables you to align with the patient while acknowledging the reality of the situation.

# How to say “I’m sorry”

- I’m sorry for any distress that this has caused.
- I wish things were different.
- I’m sorry, this was not what we expected.

