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DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE, HUMANISTIC INTERPROFESSIONAL HEALTHCARE CULTURE: A MULTI-SITE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Developing a collaborative, humanistic interprofessional healthcare culture requires optimal relational skills, respect, interpersonal cohesion, and role clarity. We developed a longitudinal curriculum to engender these skills and values in institutional leaders. We report results of a qualitative study at seven US-based academic health centers to identify participants' learning.

METHODS

At each institution, participants from at least three different professions met in small group sessions twice-monthly over nine months. Sessions focused on relational capacities to enhance leadership and professionalism, and utilized critical reflection and experiential learning to promote teamwork, self-knowledge, communication skills, and address challenges encountered by a healthcare team. Participants completed reflective responses to open-ended questions asking what knowledge, insights, or skills they gained by working in this interprofessional group and applications of their learning. Five investigators analyzed the anonymized responses using the constant comparative method.

RESULTS

Overarching themes centered on relationships and the strength of the relational nature of the learning. We observed learning on three levels:

- a) Intrapersonal learning included self-awareness, mindfulness, and empathy for self that translated to reflections on application of these to teamwork and teaching;
- b) Interpersonal learning concerned relational skills and teaching about listening, understanding others' perspectives, appreciation/respect for colleagues, and empathy for others;
- c) Systems level learning included teaching skills about resilience, conflict management, team dynamics and cultural norms, and appreciation of resources from interprofessional colleagues.

DISCUSSION

A curriculum focusing on humanistic teaching for leaders led to new insights and positive changes in relational perspectives. Learning occurred on multiple levels. Many learners reported revising previous assumptions, a marker for transformative learning. Humanistic faculty development can facilitate deep bonds between professions. ■