



Peers for Peers

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Wellbeing Program



Clinical Faculty Affairs
&
Continuing Professional
Development



Peers for Peers Program Background

The new Peers for Peers Program at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry provides one-on-one peer support for clinical faculty, emphasizing empathetic listening and shared experience.

Physician burnout is a health care crisis that has been simmering for years. To help address the issue, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry developed and implemented a Peers for Peers (P4P) program to address physician burnout and support clinician wellbeing.

Vision: Faculty wellbeing matters, caring for ourselves by building a program.

Described by the National Academy of Medicine as “a workplace syndrome characterized by high emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a low sense of accomplishment at work,” evidence suggests that burnout affects more than half of practicing physicians.

The Peers for Peers Program at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry provides one-on-one peer support for clinical faculty, emphasizing empathetic listening and shared experience. It is the first program of its kind in Canada based at an academic centre.

To ensure psychological safety, the Program engages faculty volunteers within the School’s 14 clinical departments, the Windsor Campus and Dentistry in 2020 with 17 Wellbeing Leads, now exceeding 50. The program includes continuous quality improvement provided through an executive committee, monthly network open forum “check ins” with Wellbeing Leads. More than 300 encounters have occurred since the inception of the program.



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Peers for Peers P4P Training Course

“Initially, we started with a ‘train the trainers’ approach’. We really want faculty members to feel empowered to lead the Program moving forward,” explained Dr. Andrea Lum, Vice Dean, Clinical Faculty Affairs. With the expansion of the program, Dr. Laura Foxcroft, Assistant Dean, Faculty Wellbeing formalized a Peers for Peers, P4P Training Course through our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) office. This is now available on an asynchronous online platform that will enable other centres who are interested in developing their own program to access training for their own peer supporters.

This training course is accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada leverages our faculty and staff expertise consisting of 7 modules:

1. Empathetic Listening
2. Simulated Discussion
3. Understanding Professionalism
4. Simulated Discussion
5. Recognizing and Responding to Distress
6. Understanding Non-Discrimination and Harassment
7. Implicit Bias and Inclusion

Peers for Peers Summary

Our **Peers for Peers, P4P Schulich Wellbeing Program** provides one-on-one peer support for clinical faculty, emphasizing empathetic listening and shared experience.

The **Peers for Peers Training Course** enables our Wellbeing Leads to obtain the skills needed to provide peer support.

“There is mounting evidence that these types of one-on-one conversations enhance wellness and build resilience”

Dr. Andrea Lum



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Learning Objectives

Following completion of the learning activity, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the Peers for Peers support Program.
2. Strengthen empathetic and active listening skills for supporting peers in distress.
3. Differentiate between empathetic listening and being a good clinician.
4. Describe professionalism definitions, frameworks, and policies.
5. Recognize the importance of role modelling in the development of professional identities.
6. Identify microaggressions in medicine and describe approaches to resolving challenging professional interactions.
7. Identify signs of physician distress and appreciate drivers that may cause it.
8. Employ newly acquired skills to provide support and guide peers, particularly if a peer is suicidal.
9. Describe and distinguish the aspects denoted in the Workplace Behaviour Continuum.
10. Recognize implicit biases, and employ strategies to mitigate biases in the workplace.

Peers for Peers course contact: faculty.wellbeing@schulich.uwo.ca

Web Resources:

https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/clinicalfacultyaffairs/faculty_wellbeing/index.html



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