Coaching Future Physicians: The SELECT Program's Unique 4-Year Medical School Model

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Background

SELECT (Scholarly Excellence. Leadership Experiences. Collaborative Training) is a 4 year MD program offered by the partnership of the University of South Florida Health Morsani College of Medicine (USF) in Tampa, FL and Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) in Allentown, PA. Coaching is a key differentiator of SELECT in comparison to other MD programs.

The SELECT program focuses on 3 competencies (leadership, values-based patient-centered care, and health systems), undergirded by a foundation of learning and development related to emotional intelligence skills. Emotional Intelligence = self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman 1996).

Elements of SELECT Coaching

• Focus on leadership and EI development
• Physician faculty coaching pairs
• Student cohorts and peer pairs
• Faculty development and coaching practicums
• Structured curriculum
• Distance learning and longitudinal relationships
• In-person and virtual communication

Literature Review

• Physician coaching can affect cultural change in academic medicine, however, coaching in medicine lags behind other fields (Gawande 2011)
• Physician coaching can help technical (Gawande 2011) as well as non-technical skills such as communication (Akwari 2012)
• In particular, early coaching of future physician leaders can be key to their success (Akwari 2012)

Impact on Coaching Practice

The SELECT coaching model has potential for significant impact on coaching practice in that it:

1. Exposes medical students to the benefits of coaching.
2. Provides students tools to integrate coaching into their future careers as physicians, as peer coaches, and as coaches to their work teams.
3. Develops physician faculty as coaches, creating the potential to integrate coaching into physicians’ daily practice.

Lessons Learned

• Transferability
• Pro and cons of virtual communication

Next Steps

• Continued recruitment of coaches
• Empirical research
• Networking and transferability efforts

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"[My coach] is a very good reflective listener. I feel very supported by her, both one on one and in larger settings. She takes great interest in her students and their lives. She encourages us to apply concepts and skills learned in class as part of our professional development plans and for personal growth and reflection."

"[My coach] is a gift. Truly. Everything about her is a strength. My success during the first year of medical school was profoundly symbolic; and having a person like [her] to share that joy with was very special. Her guidance kept me on track when I needed it. I can’t thank her enough. Knowing she will be a part of my medical school journey (and my professional life afterwards) makes me even more excited about my path towards becoming a physician."

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