

Lessons Learned from Online Discussion

Leadership Challenge #1: A physician on your faculty is rude and disrespectful

Participants agreed that it was important to gather as much information as possible before determining a course of action. The chair should review:

- factual information from faculty and residents;
- documentation about specific incidents;
- results of any faculty feedback mechanisms in place;
- institutional policies on appropriate behavior;

to decide on the nature and extent of the problem.

If the fact-finding reveals that a problem does exist, the next step suggested was to meet with the program director in question. The “sandwich” approach was recommended: the negative message delivered between two positive messages. The purpose of the meeting would be to:

- acknowledge the positive contributions the PD has made;
- make her aware of the effect her behavior has on others. Give specific examples;
- offer her the opportunity to give her own perspective;
- look for factors impacting on her behavior;
- identify alternative ways for her to deal with difficult situations;
- offer training or coaching on self awareness, communication, leadership, mentoring;
- clearly identify the behavior that needs to be changed, and establish a time line for follow up.

After the meeting, summarize the discussion in writing and follow up according to the mutually established time line. Depending on how the meeting went, consider whether a probationary period is warranted.

Participants agreed that if the disrespectful remarks were of a racial or sexual nature, stronger action should be taken. A verbal or written warning might be necessary, and continued disrespectful behavior could be considered grounds for dismissal.