

Aliki in the ICU

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Professional identity formation is a critical goal of residency training and is best achieved through witnessing role models, mentored reflection, and teaching specifically designed to promote compassionate, humanistic care, and personal reflection and growth.

When working in the intensive care unit setting (ICU), residents often report a disconnection between two essential goals of patient care. One goal of doctoring in any setting is to know patients as individuals. Another goal particular to the ICU setting involves rapidly attempting to stabilize incredibly ill and complex patients, often who cannot communicate for themselves. In an attempt to achieve the latter goal, very often the former is sacrificed. Further, training in the ICU setting does not currently have any built-in mechanism to learn from longer term follow up after stabilization of patients. Thus many trainees lack understanding of the profound and prolonged post-ICU complications experienced by most ICU survivors. Understanding these post-ICU complications and their impact on patients and their families is vital to physicians having an informed discussion about ICU management options as they relate to goals of care.

We aim to design a curriculum that simultaneously teaches trainees not only to provide medical stability to the critically ill but to also help them learn about patients as individuals and the individual impact of post-ICU recovery. Intentional reflective practice in this setting will further enhance professional identity formation. Every internal medicine intern and resident at JHBMC will participate in this curriculum for a minimum of 4 weeks while rotating in the medical or cardiac ICU. The objectives will be to understand the patient prior to the onset of their critical illness, learn to lead an end-of-life conversation, learn the practice of reflective journaling, and participate in a multi-disciplinary conference discussing the post-ICU care of a patient (the patients or family will be invited to join if appropriate, or will be videotaped when possible). While we have started to develop our ideas, we would welcome contributions from a diverse group of "sharks".