Teaching Physicians the Healer Role:

The McGill Approach

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McGill Programs in Whole Person Care
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“Healing is the mandate of medicine, and professionalism is how it is organised”.

Sylvia Cruess
Healing

**Definition:** Healing constitutes a response shift within the person being healed away from suffering, toward an experience of equanimity and wholeness.

Mount & Kearney
SUFFERING & THE PHYSICIAN:
Lewis E: Lancet

“…….stillbirth: coping with unreality…………event which by common consent, is cloaked in secrecy, and which by its very nature seems unreal”

Bourne: “family doctors astonishingly reluctant to know or remember anything about the patient who has had a stillbirth”

“…strong forces (of denial in both) mother and physician….hindering the mourning and healing process”

September 1976
“Some physicians show their discomfort and uneasiness either by continuing useless therapies or by detaching themselves from care.”

Mental Health Reviews
The Physician as Healer and Professional

Doctor → Patient → Disease

Hutchinson
Doctor

Disease

Patient

Hutchinson
Importance of the Diagnostic Process

1. Patient
   • Empowerment by Externalization. (White M. Re-authoring lives: interviews and essays. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications; 1995.)

2. Doctor
   • Pragmatic
   • Psychological
The Two Therapeutic Relationships

Doctor

Disease

Patient
Whole Person Care
Healing & the Art of Medicine: Concept Map

Creating a healing patient-physician relationship

Physician

What?

Patient

How?
THE “COMPETENT” PHYSICIAN

There are 3 elements involved:

1. Evidence Based Medicine (WHAT?)
2. Patient-centered Care (HOW?)
3. Reflective Practice (WHO?)
Teaching Healing

1. Simple cognitive frame
2. Emotional engagement
3. Role Modeling
4. Practice
5. Faculty Development
Physicianship 1 Sessions:

1. Introduction to the Healer Role and the Professional Role
2. Healing Relationships in Medicine
3. Suffering and Healing in Medicine
4. Healing and the Health Care Professional
5. Healing and the Patient
6. Healing and the Medical Student
PAHC 2007-2008: CONCEPTS

C1. Relating to Patients. (HMN & TH).

C2. Relating to Other Team Members. (SC).

C3. Relief Suffering & Promotion Healing. (PA).


C6. Integrating the Course Concepts (HMN & TH).
PAHC 2008-2009: CONCEPTS


C2. Relief Suffering & Promotion Healing. (PA).


C6. Relating to Other Team Members. (SC).

Teaching Healing

1. Simple cognitive frame
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The Three Therapeutic Relationships

Doctor

Disease

Patient

Hutchinson
Conclusion

• The physician has two roles: curing disease and healing patients (or helping patients heal themselves).

• The first requires technical knowledge and expertise, the second requires a special quality of presence.

• Physicians need to master both in order to provide the best care to their patients.