

MSAIV Gathering Place Presentation

Well Doc Alberta, Wellness Expo/Networking Lunch, April 27, 12:45-2:15pm Edmonton

Q. What is the target audience of your physician wellness initiative (e.g., local/provincial, learners/faculty/staff, etc.)

A. Physicians and faculty, both locally and nationally. We are interested in connecting with allies to raise awareness about interpersonal violence in medical education.

Q. Please briefly describe the initiative.

A. Medical Students Against Interpersonal Violence is a new student organization raising awareness about interpersonal violence as a medical and health issue that also affects our profession. It was formed in Calgary with plans to expand nationwide.

Q. What factors led to the launch of this initiative (i.e., why did you do it)?

A. We identified a need to enable medical students to safely voice their ideas on interpersonal violence in medical education with the help of a national network of likeminded individuals. Medical students are interested in learning how to help patients affected by violence and trauma, as well as addressing interpersonal violence or trauma experienced by medical students in personal relationships, in the workplace or at school.

Q. How did you implement this initiative?

A. In the past six months we have hosted our 1st Annual Meeting, launched a website, and created a video to highlight medical students' interest in addressing interpersonal violence. While some of our members have a particular interest in improving instruction in medical schools on topics like domestic violence, our video explains that medical students are also affected by any interpersonal violence occurring in their relationships (e.g. with family, partners, friends, patients, colleagues or preceptors).

Q. What do you hope to achieve with this initiative? (getting at the overall, big picture goal)

A. In terms of student and physician wellness, we hope to increase awareness about interpersonal violence as a social factor contributing to health issues, including mental illness, substance abuse, suicide, and chronic health conditions. We hope to improve recognition that medical students are particularly vulnerable to interpersonal violence and trauma because they are in a high-stakes situation in medical school and there is a significant power differential between preceptors and medical students. For medical students, interpersonal violence may better describe the additional meaning and order of magnitude that words like harassment, intimidation, and discrimination take on in some contexts.

Q. How will you assess the success of your initiative?

A. As a student organization, continuity of our efforts by medical students and physician support are imperative. We will assess the success of our initiative by the size and engagement of our membership and network. It may also make sense to do a baseline assessment of knowledge on interpersonal violence among medical students, faculty, or physicians with appropriate partners/resources.

Q. What were your key learnings in the process (e.g., barriers you overcame, positive outcomes, recommendations for others working on similar initiatives)?

A. Violence as a health issue is an emerging area. There is currently little recognition of it in the profession, many physicians are not familiar or comfortable with the term interpersonal violence as defined by the WHO, and some are reluctant to acknowledge that medical students or physicians

experience violence or trauma over the course of their training or work. This is however an incredible opportunity to raise awareness in a way that improves patient care as well as self-advocacy as an act of self-care in the profession. Our efforts have enabled likeminded professionals to connect with one another and we have received positive feedback on our multi-media, that it is on-point, informative, and important! For anyone working on similar initiatives: with the right approach, medical students can most definitely advocate for themselves and for their future selves in this space.