Learning Environment Working Group
General Psychiatry Residency Program

Background
The learning environment in residency education, also referred to as the learning or educational climate, is an encompassing term that refers to the physical, emotional, and social milieu in which residency training occurs. The learning environment within residency training is complex and impacted by a myriad of stakeholders. Moreover, a critical component of residency education is the clinical learning environment (CLE) at a variety of hospital sites, each with partnerships (i.e. affiliation agreements) with the University of Toronto. The CLE is also critical to residency education as it is where trainees learn about patient care in preparation for unsupervised/independent practice.

Mandate
The mandate of the Learning Environment Working Group (WG) is to use a data-informed approach to guide the residency program's response to learning environment concerns highlighted in the November 2020 RC external review and 2022 UofT PGME internal review. Based on the available data, the WG will provide recommendations to the PRPC (Psychiatry Residency Program Committee) regarding strategies to improve the learning environment. The working group will consider key factors such as psychological safety, hidden curriculum, learner experience and mistreatment, EDIIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity, and Accessibility) principles amongst others throughout their work.

Residency program leadership also acknowledges the challenges in seeking feedback regarding learning environment issues when there are concerns regarding psychological safety, for both residents and faculty, alongside the need to balance anonymity, confidentiality, and responsiveness to feedback.

The ultimate goal of the Learning Environment WG is to not just to meet standards of accreditation but also to ensure that residency training at UofT Psychiatry allows for the safety in the learning environment in which: enriching relationships between faculty supervisors/coaches/mentors and residents continue to be cultivated; feedback can be provided without fear of retribution of negative consequences; constructive conflict can occur to improve our residency program; and productive struggle towards professional identity formation and expertise development can be fostered.

Membership
Chairs: Faculty and Resident TBD
Program Evaluation co-chairs: Program Director and/or Associate Program Director
Equity and Social Justice Lead
PG Site Director (2)
Resident Advisor
Faculty Teachers (3)
-including one of the site survey co-chairs
Resident Representatives
- Resident Leadership (Chief Residents and PRAT)
- Residents from across developmental stages
- PARO representative

Input from residency program subcommittees as needed (via Chairs or co-chairs):
Assessment, Competence (including Resident Assessment and Support Subcommittee), Curriculum, Resident Wellbeing, Safety

Data from the Faculty Assessment and Support Subcommittee (FASC), Department of Psychiatry (e.g. high level themes) may also be considered.

Relationships and Reporting
The Learning Environment WG reports to the Program Director and Psychiatry Residency Program Committee (PRPC).

Key findings of the WG will be shared across portfolios in the residency program to relevant subcommittees to inform their work.

Outputs
1. Create a workplan that is reviewed by PRPC and VC Education.
2. Data collection – methods to be determined and articulated in workplan.
3. Learning Environment WG Report (with recommendations) that will be shared across the residency program community – PRPC, hospital sites, faculty, residents etc.

Administrative Support
Administrative support for planning meetings and limited data collection to be provided by the Postgraduate Education administrative team for the General Psychiatry Residency Program. Should further support be required (e.g. for data collection), the WG can make a request via the Program Director.

RC Accreditation Information

November 2020 RC External Review
Requirement 7.1.1: Teachers are regularly assessed and supported in their development
Changed from RR to 2Y due to the nature of issues regarding anonymity, particularly with [residents'] hesitation in being open/honest due to concerns regarding future opportunities.
7.1.1.1 Residents raised significant concerns about the anonymity of the teacher evaluations they complete at the end of rotation. The concerns of anonymity are increased in sites with fewer residents rotating. Approximately 50% of the residents asked about this process expressed some hesitation in being open, honest and providing constructive feedback due to perceived concerns that this would limit their future opportunities at that site. Some reported self-editing their comments carefully in order to complete the required form and gain access to their own assessments. This was in spite of a vague awareness that their feedback was not released to sta unless at least 365 days had passed and/or a minimum number of evaluations was available to collate.

GENP_CI_9.1.2.3 Indicator 9.1.2.3: Mechanisms for feedback take place in an open, collegial atmosphere. – DOES NOT MEET
9.1.2.3: There are multiple opportunities for residents to feedback information to the Program e.g., focus groups, site visits, online evaluations, resident reps, retreats, etc. Despite this, many junior residents do not always know how best to feed back their concerns to the Program and/or lack confidence in it being an open and transparent process. Many residents felt they had voiced their concerns on a number of key topics (e.g., LAE, fragmentation, call issues at HSC) but nothing is changing significantly in these key areas. While it is clear that minor program changes have been occurring, they feel they are not being heard, as some of their

consistent concerns have not been addressed. It is unclear where the problem lies, i.e., whether feedback is being muted by the various administrative layers before it gets to PRPC, whether PRPC is disregarding the concerns, or whether there is a lack of clear communication back to the resident body as a whole as to why change is not feasible or appropriate at the time. It appeared that one important issue that has not yet been evaluated is the quality/effectiveness of communication between the resident body as a whole and the higher levels of educational leadership, where decisions are made.

November 2021 UofT PGME Internal Review Feedback
The clinical learning environment, recognizing its complexity, is recognized to allow residents to have exposure and develop competence across the depth and breadth of psychiatry. While there were laudatory comments about many clinical rotations and rotation supervisors, there remains an underlying sense of angst or mistrust. This was expressed by both residents and faculty and mostly centered around the ability (or lack thereof) to provide feedback without fear of negative consequences or retribution.

Relevant Standards of Accreditation (Psychiatry)

Domain: Learners, Teachers, and Administrative Personnel
Standard 5: Safety and wellness is promoted throughout the learning environment.
Requirement 5.1.3: Residency education occurs in a positive learning environment that promotes resident wellness.
Indicator 5.1.3.1: There is a positive and respectful learning environment for all involved in the residency program.

Standard 7: Teachers deliver and support all aspects of the residency program effectively.
Element 7.1: Teachers are assessed, recognized, and supported in their development as positive role models for residents in the residency program.
Requirement 7.1.1: Teachers are regularly assessed and supported in their development.

Domain: Continuous Improvement
Standard 9: There is continuous improvement of the educational experiences, to improve the residency program and ensure residents are prepared for independent practice.
Requirement 9.1.2: A range of data and information is reviewed to inform the evaluation and improvement of all aspects of the residency program.
Indicator 9.1.2.3: Mechanisms for feedback take place in an open collegial atmosphere.

Created by: Program Director and Associate Program Director, with VC Education Review
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