

Heartworks Retreat Center



Off-site classes are held at the Heartworks Retreat Center at Deer Park Foundation for Illuminatin Sciences in Whitefish, Montana.



the human factor



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One of the great challenges in healthcare today is creating a caring environment that fulfills the patient's needs for healing at the deepest levels.

HEARTWORKS can help.

ONE OF THE GREAT CHALLENGES IN HEALTHCARE

TODAY is creating a caring environment that fulfills the patient's needs for healing at the deepest levels. Medical science alone, without considering the human factor, is no longer enough.

Most providers today understand that patient satisfaction¹ and even the healing² process itself are closely tied to the degree to which the patient's emotional and spiritual needs are met in the course of treatment.

It is also clear that patient satisfaction is directly proportional to the caregivers' attitude. Hospitals with the highest levels of employee satisfaction report the highest levels of patient satisfaction.³ Healthy relationships between doctor and patient, and among caregivers themselves, are crucial in producing positive outcomes.⁴

Conventional medical education simply does not address the essential aptitude known today as "emotional intelligence." As a result, primary care physicians fail to recognize patients' emotional signals about 80% of the time.⁵ This is a significant contributing factor in the frequency of legal claims against healthcare providers.⁶

WHAT IS NEEDED?

The key to care of the "whole person" is developing an authentic, heart-felt connection between patient and provider.

We believe that this can be achieved by cultivating four related skill sets. They are:

The Heart of Compassion

Who of us does not desire to experience more kindness and understanding when faced with serious illness? Here we learn the "vocabulary of emotions" so that we can recognize verbal and non-verbal clues; how to express empathy; how to create a positive emotional experience through the physical environment and ancillary resources; and how to care for ourselves as we care for others.

I Hear You

By learning to actively listen, to ask open-ended questions, and to let patients "tell their story," providers actually become more time-efficient. In addition to building narratives, our work here emphasizes the importance of explaining the course of diagnosis and treatment; being sensitive and direct, with patients; responding to patient anxieties; assessing patients' needs for information; and improving intra-staff communications.

Teaming Up

The key to a successful healthcare experience lies with the relationship between provider and patient. This means engaging the patient in the decision-making process and helping to manage the stress of medical intervention. Here we learn the essential steps of collaboration—among staff themselves, and between staff and the patient.

Managing Conflict

Although it is often stressful, a certain degree of conflict is inevitable in all human activities. There are, however, a number of successful methods to work through these conflicts. Here we examine individual and institutional responses to conflict, and learn how to work through disagreements in a positive way.

These skills will be taught experientially in a series of workshops that apply to the entire staff and will be especially valuable for departments and teams to attend together. Whether in teams or individually, participants will learn the practice of compassionate communication.

"The greatest science in the world, in heaven and on earth, is love."

— Mother Teresa

WHO ARE WE?

HEARTWORKS was founded by Brian Muldoon, the author of *The Heart of Conflict* (Putnam 1996) and an experienced lawyer, mediator and national speaker in the field of conflict and leadership. He has been featured on *Good Morning America* and PBS and has made numerous radio and television appearances.

Brian has worked extensively with healthcare systems and medical practices across the country and has a strong commitment to applying the wisdom of spirituality to the workplace.

In 1999 Brian was the co-director of the Synthesis Dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. He is the co-founder of the Friends of Compassion, an international service and pilgrimage organization.

Brian lives in Whitefish, Montana.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Annals of Family Medicine* 3: 331-338 (2005)
- 2 *Joint Commission Journal On Quality and Safety*, 2003:659-670
- 3 *Journal of Nursing Administration* 33[2]
- 4 *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 2006; 21(s1): S28-S34
- 5 *JAMA* 2000; 284: 1021-1027
- 6 *JAMA* 2002; 287: 2951-2957; *JAMA* 1997; 277: 553-559

planting the seeds of compassionate care