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## **Longitudinal service-learning cultivates intrinsic motivation and protects against burn-out in medical students**

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## Longitudinal service-learning cultivates intrinsic motivation and protects against burn-out in medical students

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### Topic:

Burnout is rampant in health professionals—including medical students—and has consequences for patient care and clinician well-being. A robust sense of intrinsic motivation is correlated with enhanced physician wellbeing and may protect against burnout. Service-learning may cultivate intrinsic motivation by tethering learners to their core values and allowing learners to make a direct impact on their communities.

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) now lists a specific standard for service-learning, but less than a quarter of American medical schools reported meeting this commitment in 2015. Though medical schools are working to build service-learning curricula, limited data informs anticipated outcomes for learners and community partners participating in service-learning. We describe a longitudinal service-learning curriculum with attention to learners' feedback on how participation impacted intrinsic motivation and prevented against burnout.

### Short Description:

This session will explore intrinsic motivation as a protective force against burnout, and will describe medical students' qualitative and quantitative feedback about how participation in a longitudinal service-learning curriculum impacted their intrinsic motivations for pursuing medicine.

### Four questions that were posed to/considered by session participants:

- 1) *How does burnout undermine professional identity development among medical trainees?*
- 2) *How does intrinsic motivation impact physician burnout and wellbeing, and is intrinsic motivation modifiable?*
- 3) *What is service-learning, and how does it differ from volunteerism?*
- 4) *How can service-learning be designed to cultivate intrinsic motivation and protect against trainee burnout?*

### Three take home points from our session:

- 1) *A strong fund of intrinsic motivation is correlated with greater physician well-being.*
- 2) *Service-learning is a curricular intervention incorporating student service to the community in response to community identified concerns; best practice incorporates ample student preparation for—and reflection on—the community engagement.*
- 3) *Longitudinal, mentored service-learning curricula placing students in positions of agency in their communities may cultivate intrinsic motivation and protect against burnout during the core clinical year.*

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