

Teaching the "art" of code status discussions: A 2-part module

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Establishing goals of care is a key step in the delivery of patient-centered care. For many patients, addressing preferences around resuscitation (also called "code status") also factors strongly into these goal-setting discussions. Although junior residents appreciate the importance of these patient-doctor encounters, many learners feel ill equipped in the absence of formal teaching on the necessary communication skills.

We sought to design a 2-part teaching module for junior residents to introduce the basic principles of code status discussions. First, we created a short preparatory video that outlines the fundamental concepts and suggests some communication strategies. We then developed an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)-style patient-doctor interaction to incorporate into an existing half-day workshop aimed at teaching and assessing the CanMEDS Communicator Role.

The scenario is designed to give learners hands-on practice at discussing code status and goals of care as well as timely and individualized feedback on their performance. The format offers both formative and evaluative opportunities for the Communicator Role. Ongoing research will seek to address the impact of this module on residents' comfort level and skills in leading goals of care discussions.

The module will be piloted with a group of core Internal Medicine residents in summer 2010. Preliminary learner experience and evaluations will be presented.