Stop Complaining and Keep Those Complaints Coming

By: Olga Sanford Kereches, M.D.

If the premise of this article seems a little self-contradictory that’s because it is. Life can be that way, I guess, and I don’t have answers more than anyone else. I can only offer perspective gained as chief resident.

The first of two contradictory observations is that complaining tends to make life harder for the complainer and everyone else. Often, there is little that can be done in response to the complaint without generating a torrent of new ones. They generally add stress, deplete energy, and consume time; all precious commodities during residency. Don’t take it personally. Yes, some do it more than others, but complaints kept to yourself are still complaints and we all do it—just ask my husband.

When I sometimes found myself trapped in petty grievances, I had the fortune of a misfortunate background to snap me back into perspective. Where I come from, ECT is administered without anesthesia and patients routinely die of alcoholic delirium simply due to lack of resources. I don’t know if this kind of relativistic thinking is constructive in the long run but it worked for me, at least in the moment.

I noticed the drama-inducing effect of complaints as a junior resident, and it was a goal of mine as chief resident to help calm the atmosphere so residents could focus on being residents. Then, I began as chief resident and eventually became aware of the second of two contradictory observations.

Complaints, almost all complaints, are the life-blood of a functional organization. If we allow ourselves the ultimate level of conceit (perhaps via the relativistic thinking previously described) and believe that we have the greatest institution on earth, then, by definition, it is one that undergoes continuous improvement. That improvement cannot simply spring forth from the mind of an omnipotent administrator. It requires input; and not just input people like to hear. Even seemingly trivial complaints are usually symptoms of a more significant pathology worthy of treatment.

How to reconcile the paradox? Like I said, I don’t have answers. It does not appear possible to establish an objective criterion that categorizes all complaints as either constructive or counterproductive. Unable to escape two contradictory truths, I maintain the cognitive dissonance with the following:

To residents: The less you complain, the easier your life will be. If everything seems more important than anything else, ask yourself if that is a logical possibility.

To leadership: Embrace complaints as an opportunity to gain insight and drive improvement. If everything seems trivial, ask yourself if that is a logical possibility.

To everyone: From the bottom of my heart—thank you for the last four years. Residency feels like a sacrifice but, in the end, I feel like I have received more than I have given (witness this article).
INTROPHASE

Welcome new medical students!

Introphase was held the week of June 18. It was a time for the 58 new third-year students to get acquainted with the Wichita Campus and learn basic information they will need for their clinical rotations. Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences sponsored a lunch for the students on June 21. Interim chair Lyle Baade, Ph.D., and associate professor Michael Burke, M.D., provided a warm welcome. It was a great opportunity to introduce the incoming students to Psychiatry, and talk with students interested in the psychiatry field.

Medical students experience their Psychiatry clerkship rotation during their third year. The clerkship is offered 12 times per year, accommodating approximately seven students at a time. In this four-week rotation, the students are tasked with six goals:

1) Obtain a complete psychiatric history and perform a complete mental status examination
2) Conduct an interview in a manner that facilitates information gathering and formation of a therapeutic rapport
3) Gain familiarity with common medical tests used to evaluate patients with psychiatric disorders and understand the significance of the results
4) Formulate diagnoses based upon established criteria and be able to recognize reasonable alternatives in the form of a differential diagnosis
5) Recognize psychiatric emergencies and know how to initiate treatment responses
6) Understand the potential contributions of the various medical, allied health, and social service disciplines and be able to suggest a comprehensive treatment plan that utilizes appropriate resources

Opportunities for clinical skills mastery are provided through clinical service assignments, formal weekly practicums with real patients focused on interviewing skills, and mental status examination. Faculty and residents directly observe student performance and provide immediate structured feedback.
The 2011-2012 graduation ceremony was held Saturday, June 23, at the Rolling Hills Country Club in Wichita. Approximately 50 people attended to celebrate the accomplishments of the psychiatry residents and neuropsychology fellows. Inna D’Empaire, M.D., director of residency training, recognized the following fourth-year residents: Veronica Amey, M.D., Olga Kereches, M.D., and Moneesh Mittal, M.D. Lyle Baade, Ph.D., recognized Ryan Schroeder, Psy.D., on completing the neuropsychology fellowship. Along with the graduates, many others were recognized for their work. The awards presented include:

Veronica Amey, M.D., and Olga Kereches, M.D., Chief Resident Award
Cheryl Wehler, M.D., Bharati Award for Excellence in Outpatient Care
Aveekshit Tripathi, M.D., Bharati Award for Research
Shean McKnight, M.D., Coyner Award for Research
Jana Lincoln, M.D., Resident “Team Player”

Dr. Baade, interim chair, addressing the graduates, faculty, and staff.

Winn Epilepsy Research Award
Jana Lincoln, M.D., Teacher of the Year Award

Dr. D’Empaire acknowledged the department’s appreciation to Ralph Bharati, M.D., and Laurie Coyner, M.D., in honor of their continued support of the residency training program.

Dr. Baade recognized the following with a Chair’s Appreciation Award: Jana Lincoln, M.D., for service to the department and support of the department’s educational mission and Kristin Jones, A.P.R.N., for service to the department for direction of the Outpatient Clinics.

Resident graduates, Olga Kereches, M.D., is with Prairie View in Wichita and Moneesh Mittal, M.D., is with Horizons Mental Health Center in Hutchinson. Ryan Schroeder, Psy.D., will complete his training in August and will be joining the faculty of the department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.
Grand Rounds Program Update

We are in the final stages of planning the 2013 Grand Rounds series, and we have some exciting new things planned!

The University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) Continuing Education Department will now provide ACCME sponsorship for our Grand Rounds series. One of the most exciting opportunities this will provide us is the ability to be accredited through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Nurses play an important role in the mental health field, and we are proud to provide an avenue for their continued learning and growth. Nurses will be able to earn credit beginning August 14 for attending Grand Rounds. KUMC will also sponsor our Category 1 credit issuance through the American Medical Association. Education credits will continue to be available through the American Psychological Association, which will now be sponsored directly through the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Attendees may notice a small change to the check-in process at each Grand Rounds as a different form will be used to sign in.

We are excited to welcome a number of speakers from across the country this year, including:

- Nuri B. Farber, M.D. – St Louis, Mo.
- Sandra B. Barker, Ph.D. – Richmond, Va.
- Anthony Tobia, M.D. – Piscataway, N.J.
- Zachary Stowe, M.D. – Little Rock, Ark.
- Alexander S. Yung, M.D., MSHS – Los Angeles, Calif.
- Jeffrey Burns, M.D. – Kansas City, Kan.
- Carroll W. Hughes, Ph.D, ABPP – Dallas, Texas

Grand Rounds are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, beginning at 11 a.m. August 14. Via Christi will continue to host us in the McNamara Center, on the third Floor Education Center. Visit us online at wichita.kumc.edu/psychiatry-and-behavioral-sciences/grand-rounds.html to learn more!

Presentations:

Publications:
