

PRECLINICAL EXAMPLES

ACADEMIC

Kyra and Jon are roommates and P&S students. They have their Renal exam for BHD one Friday morning. Kyra decides to take the exam in her bedroom, while Jon decides to work at their kitchen table. When Kyra finishes the exam, she goes out of her room to go to the bathroom. As she walks by, she sees out of the corner of her eye that Jon is flipping through Pathoma and has First Aid open on the table. She feels confused and hurries into the bathroom. When she leaves the bathroom the books are gone.

Kyra sends an email to the honor code committee about her concern. An HCC chair fields her email, and reaches out to Jon by email to ask him about what happened. Jon denies that any cheating occurred. He admits that he felt unprepared for the exam and was not able to study as much as he should have. He says he has been under a lot of stress as his mother is chronically ill and struggling with a flare up as well as medication costs. He said that while he had the books next to him with the anticipation that he may need to consult them, but that he did not end up using them. The HCC member thanks him for his honesty, offers their sympathies, and encourages him to reach out to wellness or mental health services.

The HCC chair then forms a panel of 6 committee members, and they discuss the situation. Two possible scenarios could occur from here:

A. Through discussion and follow-up conversations, it is impossible to determine whether Jon cheated, as Jon insists he did not but Kyra feels certain of what she saw. The panel feels that given the pass/fail nature of the exam, there is not a clear academic advantage afforded to Jon, and that the harms in this situation include harm to the professional interpersonal trust between Kyra and Jon, and harm to Jon's own learning and integrity as he did consider cheating. A mediation is set up between Jon and Kyra to discuss the circumstances and to repair their professional and personal relationship. Through their conversation, they come to a mutual understanding. Jon has begun seeing a therapist he was referred to via mental health services that he finds very helpful in managing his anxiety and stress. HCC checks back in with him later in the semester, and he says the conversation and mediation allowed him to reflect and gain better perspective on how he can approach stressful or challenging situations differently in the future without compromising his integrity or ideals.

B. During the deliberation by the panel, they decide to follow up with Jon and Kyra for more information. When discussing with Jon further, he becomes silent and eventually breaks down and admits that he did consult the books but that he was afraid to admit to it as he thought the consequences would be too severe. Given the admission of an academic infraction, the HCC refers Jon to Dean Mellman for a further discussion of how to proceed. (Find out from Dean Mellman what a typical response to this situation might be?)

INTERPERSONAL

Sandra, Wan, Divya, and Malik are all in an anatomy group together. Divya and Malik have been confiding in each other because they feel very frustrated with the other two members of their group. They feel as though Sandra has been very overbearing, doing the majority of the dissection without allowing others their fair time, asking and answering all the questions when faculty come over, and not giving others any time to think before answering on the practical

exams. On the other hand, Wan has missed a couple dissection sessions, never attended any non-dissecting sessions, and seems zoned out during the practicals.

After exam 2, Divya and Malik are fed up and decide to email HCC. They discuss their situation with two HCC members. While they do not feel comfortable approaching Sandra as they are worried she will be defensive, the HCC members coach them in approaching Wan.

Divya and Malik ask Wan to chat. They ask him if everything is going okay, and explain that they feel a little frustrated that he is not participating as he should be. Wan is surprised, and admits that he felt so frustrated by Sandra early on that he just checked out and decided it wasn't worth his time. Divya and Malik sympathize, and ask him if he would feel comfortable participating in a mediation together. Wan says he would rather not, but that he will start to show up more if Malik and Divya will be talking to Sandra. The next week, Wan shows up to both the sessions, and seems to be making more of an effort.

Divya and Malik tell the HCC that their conversation with Wan went well, and they would like to set up a mediation with Sandra. HCC reaches out to Sandra to schedule the mediation. Sandra seems surprised that her group members have something they want to discuss with her, but says she is happy to join. In the mediation, Divya and Malik explain to Sandra how they have been feeling. Sandra is very caught off guard. She is initially defensive, but eventually becomes quiet and then apologetic. She says she was not trying to dominate the space but was both very excited about learning and also feeling very stressed about performance. She says maybe she was overcompensating and didn't mean to step on their toes. The group works together on the goals of the mediation: they determine that the learning of Sandra's group members was negatively impacted. While the harm was not very severe, it did have a significant impact on their enjoyment and learning in the course. Sandra is responsible for repairing the harm, and her repair will occur as follows: she apologizes to all three of her group members for impacting their learning, she will let them do the majority of the dissection for the rest of the semester, and she will allow more space for their voices in sessions and during the exams.

At the end of the semester, the two HCC members check back in with Sandra. She says that she feels she has learned a lot about how to work better in a group, and she feels like things have improved between her, Divya, Malik, and Wan. She says Wan has attended and participated in the sessions, and they have all decided to stay together in a tutorials group.

CLINICAL EXAMPLES

ACADEMIC

Anthony is an MCY student on his OB/GYN rotation. On his first day on the gynecology-oncology service the intern on his team tells him that notes must be complete before rounds begin at 6:30am every morning. "But for tomorrow, don't worry" she says, "you can just copy-forward my note from today and update the physical exam after you pre-round tomorrow."

Tina is also on the gyn-onc service with Anthony and gets the same instructions from the intern. However, she writes her notes for each of her patients on her own which requires her to get in to pre-round almost an hour earlier than Anthony each day.

At the end of their first week, Anthony and Tina are walking out of the hospital and Anthony remarks, “This rotation is way easier than everyone warned us. We don’t even have to get in that early and pre-rounding isn’t that stressful because we get to copy-forward the residents’ notes.”

Tina is sleeping less than 4 hours a night trying to keep up with reading up on her patients so she can construct her own assessments and plans each morning and be at the hospital by 5am. Tina knows that MCY students are not permitted to copy-forward notes and she is upset that Anthony seems to be bragging about how easy he finds the rotation. She consults HCC to explore how best to address the issue she has with Anthony’s behavior.

The co-chair who receives Tina’s email reviews the concern with the other co-chairs. They determine they should speak with Tina about this concern. In their conversation with Tina, she expresses that she doesn’t want to “get Anthony into trouble” for copying-forward notes but she is also frustrated that he is doing less work than her every day and that from the perspective of the residents and attendings they seem to be performing equally well.

HCC reaches out to Anthony for his statement and he admits to copying-forward notes. A panel of 6 HCC members meets and determines this case can be handled via mediation.

Two HCC members mediate a meeting with Tina and Anthony. Anthony reveals he has felt guilty about copying-forward the notes— but he thought because the resident told him to do so, it is the expectation on this rotation that medical students copy-forward. He also feels the residents don’t have time to go over their notes and presentations with them in the morning and he is afraid of having incorrect or incomplete information when he presents on rounds. Tina expresses that she has had these same fears and they realize that they both have felt unsupported on this rotation but approached this insecurity in different ways. Tina and Anthony determine that they should speak to the clerkship director and senior student resource about their experience so future medical students can feel better equipped to perform well on this service.

INTERPERSONAL

Taylor and Sonia are MCY students on their surgery rotation. Sonia is in the OR late on a Thursday night so misses the debrief with the residents at the end of the day when they usually learn about the cases for the following day. She texts Taylor to find out which ORs the cases will be in tomorrow. Taylor replies “Oh, the schedule is actually in flux tomorrow so they told us to just get in at the usual time and they’ll let us know after rounds.”

On Friday morning, Taylor is not at rounds. An intern says to Sonia, “The case that Dr. Suarez is doing right now is extremely rare. I was surprised that he allowed Taylor to be in the OR for it but I guess it shows it’s always worth it to ask.”

Sonia is upset that Taylor didn’t tell her about Dr. Suarez’s case and that she missed the opportunity to see a rare surgery. Throughout the rotation, Taylor and Sonia have divided up the cases for the following day between themselves. Every day Taylor asks to take the most interesting or rare cases. Sonia consults HCC to explore how best to address the issues she has with Taylor’s behavior. Two HCC members reach out to Sonia and she determines she would like to proceed with a mediation with Taylor.

During the mediation, Taylor says that they feel immense pressure from their family to be interested in surgery because both of their parents are surgeons. Taylor feels more interested in internal medicine but thinks that if they can see exciting surgical cases, maybe they can feel the same excitement about surgery that their parents feel. Sonia expresses that she doesn't want to take away from Taylor's exposure to surgery but she is considering applying into surgery and would also like to see a diversity of cases. She also expresses that she felt angry when Taylor appeared to go behind her back to be part of Dr. Suarez's case. Taylor apologizes to Sonia and says they will make sure to work to evenly distribute the cases going forward and that they won't attempt to get in on cases surreptitiously.

The HCC members check back in with Taylor at the end of the semester and Taylor reports that they told their parents they want to apply into medicine and not surgery. Their parents were initially upset but are happy Taylor was honest with them and are supporting their decision.