

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Let's continue to cultivate a culture of uplifting hearts

It's 5 p.m. on a July day – your first month as a fresh junior resident. You've just received handover for all the people admitted under your service and desperately cross your fingers hoping that the pager doesn't buzz that deadly noise while you finally rest for a quick snack.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

Crap!

You stuff the rest of your granola bar down as you open up your computer and dial in the five numbers that popped up.

“Hi ... sorry, we would have called sooner, but we just activated a MET ...”

You quickly run to the wards to assess the situation, while simultaneously messaging your senior. This is it. Your first MET call – everything you've been rigorously preparing for but also hoped you'd never have to come across so early on. You run through the ABCs in your head and try to look up as much information as you can before heading in the room. However, as soon as you enter the room, you freeze.

A pitted feeling rises in the back of your throat. Heat and sweat break out even though you let out a shake. The hairs on your skin stand. You worry that the situation is more dire, so you ask the nurses for a code blue activation and start CPR. Thankfully, ICU doctors arrive in short seconds and gracefully take over to assess the situation. A few seconds later, your senior joins, and you give them a rundown of what you know.

Hours pass by ... it's finally 8 a.m. You've finished relaying handover to your team about overnight issues. The sounds of the hospital alarms begin to slowly disappear into the background, while those of vehicles rushing into the parkade approach. This all begins to fade into a hum as you put in your headphones and “Pink + White” by Frank Ocean starts playing from where you last paused it.

Twenty minutes pass by, and you finally reach home. You kick off your shoes, place your keys and pager on the table and begin to run a hot shower. Eventually, with the sunlight just barely creeping through the window coverings, you close your eyes and lay there, succumbing to the heaviness that begins to pour over your body. The sound of birds chirping slowly eases you into pure post-call bliss.

Nothing hits quite like a post-call sleep after a rough shift. However, thinking back to my first code blue as a junior resident, I felt I had disappointed so many people due to my uncertainty with my approach.

Could I have done a better job? Should I have noticed any signs earlier? Is this all my fault? Am I even cut out for this?

Thankfully, the patient was resuscitated and safely transported to ICU; however, this call shift highlighted some of the things I've come to appreciate throughout residency.

To the senior residents and preceptors

Thank you for your mentorship and guidance in surviving tough rotations and call shifts. Thank you for coming in at just the right time to support me through a complex situation, for those moments of reflection to recognize what I could improve on, and more importantly, for appreciating what I did well. Thank you for those hourly coffee/snack breaks to keep us going through the swarm of consults and for dismissing my assistance so that I can sneak in a few hours of sleep.

To our allied health workers

Thank you for the work that you do to help us learn about things that are crucial for patient health and well-being. Thank you for the assistance you provide in approaching situations that I haven't encountered often. Thank you for noticing any errors I may make at 3 a.m. and for bringing those to my attention.

To my fellow junior residents

Thank you for being a shoulder to cry on and for those countless venting sessions and discussions for tough days. Thank you for being available to answer my texts to run ideas and approaches by you, for fact-checking the appropriate antibiotic for ESBL. Thank you for providing great company during the busy days and nights. Thank you for offering a hand as well as the many celebrations for each of our wins.

And to my friends and family

Thank you for the support you provide, whether it comes to helping with cooking and cleaning, sending wellness packages or calling to check in on me. Thank you for reminding me of the person I am outside of medicine.

Through the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, it's easy to get caught up in the rush and forget to pause and acknowledge the little things that can make life beautiful. Yet, amidst the chaos, a simple yet profound gesture can have the power to uplift spirits, transform relationships and foster a culture of positivity and appreciation. Whether it's a heartfelt smile or the warmth of a cup of coffee in your hands, appreciation connects us over these mutually shared feelings.

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