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DEFINING THE EXPERIENCE: HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE PRACTICING WHOLE PERSON CARE?

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INTRODUCTION

Whole Person Care (WPC) is a growing movement in health care recognized as an important tool for both practitioners and patient outcomes. What remains unclear is what WPC looks like in practice and how providers know they are practicing it successfully.

METHODS

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 30 healthcare providers during the WPC congress in 2017. An iterative qualitative process was used to code and analyze the data using qualitative research software. The primary research question explored how practitioners know that they are practicing WPC.

RESULTS

Our analysis revealed that the practice of WPC is an individual experiential process appreciated through self-awareness and connection. Most practitioners reported the importance of i) their ability to be present in an interaction and to acknowledge their own emotions, ii) the relationship between practitioner and patient, characterized by a feeling of trust and of mutual impact, and iii) relying on external cues, such as explicit patient feedback and body language.

In this workshop, attendees will be prompted to reflect on their experiences of providing WPC through individual and group exercises. Attendees will be invited to reflect on the above results and discuss emerging themes. This participatory research model creates an interactive space for workshop attendees to build on our data and guide further analysis.

CONCLUSION

Cues to whether you are practicing WPC rely on practitioner self-awareness and perceptions of how interactions transpire. This workshop offers an opportunity to create an experiential map of the elements contributing to the growing practice of WPC. ■