MCG MEDICAL EDUCATOR MINUTE #10

Fixed v. Growth Mindsets Toward Learning

BACKGROUND

Having a growth (vs. fixed) learning mindset has been shown to assist learners in reaching their full potential. Medical teachers can promote flexibility and growth by noting and redirecting maladaptive thoughts/actions exhibited by their learners. These prompts may be particularly helpful with medical students who have likely excelled academically most of their lives but now face higher volume and greater complexity of learning content.

	MINDSETS Based on research by Carol Dweck[1]	
	FIXED	**GROWTH**
	Intelligence is static.	Intelligence can be developed.
	Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to…	Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to…
CHALLENGES	Avoid challenges.	Embraces challenges.
OBSTACLES	Give up easily.	Persistent in the face of setbacks.
EFFORT	See efforts as fruitless or worse.	Sees effort as the path to mastery.
CRITICISM	Ignore useful negative feedback	Learns from criticism.
SUCCESS OF OTHERS	Feel threatened by the success of others.	Find lessons and inspiration in the success of others.
	As a result, may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.	As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.
	All this confirms a deterministic view of the world.	All this gives them a greater sense of free will.

Promoting growth mindset

- Ask learner to elaborate on his/her answers.
- Prompt learner to set goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable and Agreed-Upon, Realistic, Time-Based)
- Alter learner's self-disparaging comments by adding "yet"
    - *I can't figure this biostatistics out. …Yet.*
    - *Pharmacology is too hard. … So far.*
- Promote growth language.
    - This is just too difficult — Time to try some different strategies
    - I made another mistake — Just another chance to learn
    - I've learned what I need to pass test — I can learn a little more about this disease

WANT MORE?

https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve

RESOURCES

[1] Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. C.S. Dweck (2007)