

STANFORD PRN SUPPORT: Physician Resource Network

Purpose: To provide our physicians and trainees with confidential, independent, legally-protected collegial support and resources for life's inevitable clinical, professional, and personal challenges.

Everyone can use a little help sometimes

Why PRN Support?

Peer supporters are available to talk about whatever you want to talk about. Possible topics include:

- distress over difficult clinical events or litigation
- problems with career or workplace conflicts
- work-home-life issues
- burnout
- patient issues
- personal or family concerns

We know that at certain times doctors prefer to talk to colleagues over any other group. We value and are committed to your welfare.

What do peer supporters do?

While we don't have a magic wand, we can listen, provide perspective, provide resources, and help you identify options. Doctors who have used the program have been overwhelmingly positive; they have appreciated feeling heard in the context of not being judged, and of receiving practical and helpful information.

Who are the peer supporters?

Stanford Medicine physicians from a variety of specialties have been trained in peer support and are volunteering their time. You will be paired with someone who is *not* in your department and who does not know you, but who has a similar background.

Talking to someone with a slightly different viewpoint can be very helpful. Also, peer supporters may understand circumstances in a way that even caring family members may not.

How do I know this won't get back to my department?

The fact that a conversation occurred is only known by the PRN Support Program Director and the peer supporter. No records are kept of the conversation content. We are an independent program, and are not associated with any evaluative part of the Medical Staff Office, SOM, LPCH, PCHA, SHC, PCHA or UHA. The only outgoing information from PRN Support is quarterly usage stats and anonymous feedback to improve the program. Confidentiality is a seriously upheld priority.

Are these conversations legally protected?

PRN Support is a resource provided by the Medical Executive Committee, and as such, peer support conversations are protected from legal discovery by third parties with rare exceptions. *

Are there any other limits to confidentiality?

As you can understand, we may need to breach confidentiality if there is danger to yourself or others, including substance use issues that put patients at risk, or disclosure of child/elder/dependent adult abuse or neglect. We can discuss complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation in a "hypothetical" way. **

What if I am worried about a colleague?

Thank you for caring about your colleague! Please tell them that you are concerned, and let them know about the PRN Support program. We believe it is best if people self-refer.

How do I contact PRN Support?

Email the address below, which only goes to the PRN Support Program Director. A peer supporter will be assigned and will contact you within a couple of days. Face-to-face meeting would be ideal, but from a practical standpoint we can also talk by phone. Typically, peer support consists of one or two interactions, with resources being sent to you in follow-up. We are all part of a medical community of shared experiences. We are here for you!

prnsupport@stanford.edu

<http://wellmd.stanford.edu/get-help/prn-support.html>

* Legal protection for the Peer Support program occurs through California Evidence Code 1157, in which the Medical Executive Committee provides this resource to enhance quality of care by supporting physicians with personal and professional challenges. Rarely, regulatory agencies including CMS, CDPH, the Medical Board of California, and the Joint Commission may ask for disclosure, but since no records of conversation content are kept, there would be nothing material to disclose except the fact that a conversation occurred.

** Depending on the circumstances, if we are informed about discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation, we may need to report this internally to appropriate Stanford departments, or externally to regulatory agencies. To speak with a neutral party without putting Stanford University or the School of Medicine on notice about the content of the discussion, contact the Office of the Ombudsperson. <http://med.stanford.edu/ombuds.html>.