STANFORD PRN SUPPORT: Physician Resource Network

**Purpose:** To provide our physicians 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**

**FAQ**

**What kinds of things can I talk to a peer supporter about?**
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, and personal or family concerns. We know that at certain times doctors prefer to talk to colleagues over any other group. We value you and are committed to your welfare.

**What can a peer supporter actually do for me?**
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?**
Peer supporters are trained volunteer physicians from a variety of specialties throughout Stanford Medicine. You will be paired with someone who is not in your department/division 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, supporters who are peers may understand circumstances in a way that even caring family members and friends may not.

**How do I know that 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, and the conversation details are only known by the peer supporter. We are an independent program, and are not associated with any evaluative part of the Medical Staff Office, SOM, LPCH, SHC, 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, PRN Support conversations are protected from legal discovery with rare exceptions. *

**Are there any other limits to confidentiality?**
As you can understand, we may need to breach confidentiality in the circumstances of danger to yourself or others, including substance use issues that put patients at risk, and disclosure of child/elder/dependent adult abuse or neglect.

**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

* Legal protection for the PRN 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.