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Schwartz center rounds: Fostering compassion, communication, and teamwork

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Shortly before his death in 1995, Kenneth B. Schwartz, a cancer patient at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), founded the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center®, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and advancing compassionate health care. The Center sponsors Schwartz Rounds®, a multidisciplinary forum where doctors, nurses, chaplains, social workers, and other staff reflect on important psychosocial issues that arise in caring for patients. Attendees participate in an interactive discussion about issues anchored in a case presentation and share their experiences, thoughts and feelings. The patient narratives may center on wonderful events and transcendent experiences, or awful stories, where staff can only bear witness

to the suffering. The Rounds focus on caregivers' experiences, and encourage staff to share insights, own their vulnerabilities, and support each other. The primary objective is to foster healing relationships and provide support to professional caregivers, enhance communication among caregivers, and improve the connection between patients and caregivers. Currently, more than 50,000 clinicians attend monthly Schwartz Rounds at 182 sites in 30 states, numbers that are rapidly growing. We will review the reasons that contribute to the success of this model of multidisciplinary reflection.

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