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Conflict With Patient: Parents and Vaccine Hesitancy

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Parents and Vaccine Hesitancy

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Learning Community Group: Yellow 51



Professionalism Conflict with Patient

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A parent is unwilling to have their child receive routine immunizations, and becomes agitated when discussing the topic

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- Politely explain that you will ultimately respect their choices, acknowledge that you understand they are worried about their child
- Inquire about their reasoning for not wanting vaccines
- Present current information on the efficacy of immunization and the risks of not immunizing
- Explain that adverse events are rare
- Encourage them to keep an open mind and let them know they can always follow a catch-up schedule in the future if needed



Reflections

1. A growth mindset enables one to use potential conflicts with patients as an opportunity for learning and improving our empathy and communication skills. When we encounter patients who respond in ways we were not anticipating, we need to stay open-minded and attempt to understand their reaction rather than simply de-escalating the situation. By embracing a growth mindset, physicians are able to learn and employ strategies that not only allow patients to feel heard and understood, but to provide optimal care as well.
2. The white coat may often symbolize a power imbalance to patients, so we must be aware of that when counselling patients on topics they feel strongly about. If a patient or caregivers of a patient have a differing opinion than that of the provider, the white coat may serve to heighten that barrier, necessitating extra work in empathic communication to make sure patients feel at ease.

