

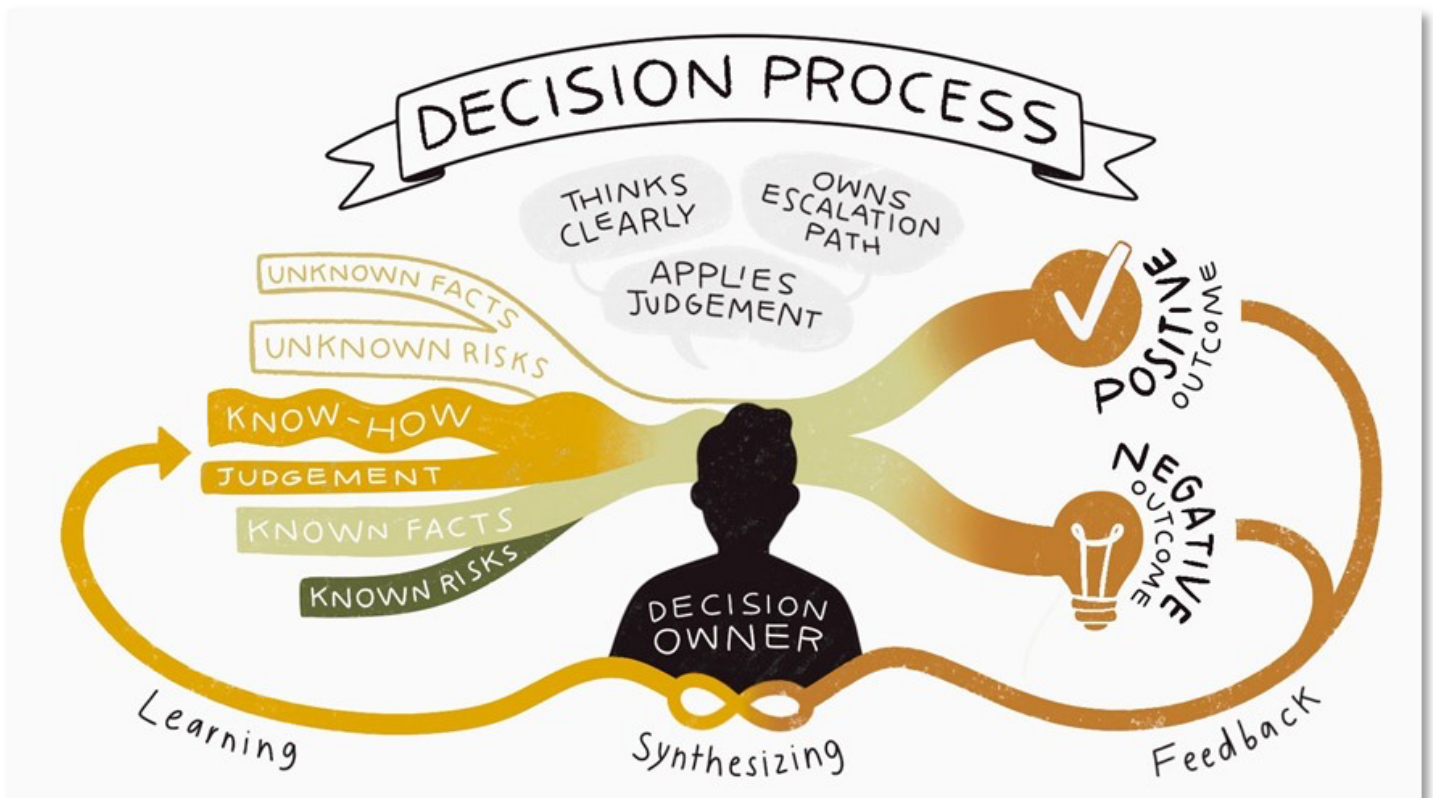
dear residents

It Changes You and You will Change It

June 30, 2024

Dear Residents,

A big welcome to all the incoming residents. July 1 is a momentous day — all the preceding years of preparation have readied you to finally put that hard-earned MD degree to good use. One of my mentors, Dr. Herb Fred, had many “Fredisms” one which was that MD really stands for “makes decisions.” He recognized that the most important cognitive skill for physicians is getting to the point of doing something or actively not doing something— aka make a decision. He exhorted us to be thoughtfully decisive and to assess each situation with independent contemplation (more on this later on July 3 when I do the clinical reasoning talk for you). Even when situations are apparently routine, there is uncertainty in most clinical scenarios — for example, in a patient with fever and a pulmonary infiltrate, are you sufficiently confident to start antibiotics? Perhaps you are, or perhaps you are not (perhaps because something does not fit). This is why you make a decision to either treat empirically or make a decision to wait until you collect more information. The imperative to make a decision is often driven by the acuity of the situation.



Most of you become physicians because of the other meaning of MD — "makes a difference." To serve others using your carefully honed knowledge and skills is why you chose the profession in the first place (you will get so many opportunities to do this that it will fill you with great satisfaction). As physicians, we find ourselves in many phases of patient illness — prevention, restoration, and palliation. At each of these moments, we make a difference — we prevent illness, we limit complications/relieve suffering, or we facilitate a dignified death. Sometimes we fully cure the condition.

Each resident cohort is a little different from the one that came before it and each year the environment also evolves — changes in the patient population, new ways of delivering care, new technology, new diseases, new drugs, new guidelines. When these two streams (new residents and a changed environment) merge, we find both expected and unexpected circumstances, and this is where you come in. This experience will change you but more importantly, you will change the residency program. The dynamic nature of this interface creates the necessity for those on the frontline to become change agents.

Each week, you will receive a “fuel gauge” evaluation (which is completely optional). If you choose to complete it, you can let us know your “fuel level” and if you wish, you can leave some feedback for the program. Your experiences, your observations, and your ideas are what we will drive meaningful change in the program. Residency training will change you in both subtle and not so subtle ways. And your actions will change the residency program perceptibly (often for the better!)



Thank you for being here and good luck to everyone on July 1.

Dino Kazi