

Abstract: Carrots Not Sticks: Applying Motivation Theories to Faculty Development to Encourage Sustained Engagement

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Background: Background: Medical educators provide programs, workshops, and events to develop faculty, yet engagement in these efforts is consistently challenging. While needs assessments help us understand the content and preferences of faculty, medical educators still struggle to understand what motivates faculty to engage in their own professional development. Tailoring faculty development to individuals motivation can encourage persistence in professional development efforts and productivity in desired outcomes.

Methods: When developing faculty development activities we often forget to account for faculty motivation. Thus, authors critically reviewed their faculty development efforts from the lens of motivation theory, specifically self-determination theory (SDT) (2) and prosocial motivation (3). Through self-evaluation of each institution's own professional development programs, authors sought to identify ways to leverage prosocial and intrinsic motivation of faculty in their offerings. Authors connected each of their faculty development opportunities to SDT and prosocial motivational concepts and discussed opportunities to revise approaches based on their findings.

Results: Authors created a table outlining their own faculty development programs, top reasons why their faculty choose to participate, and top reasons who faculty choose to drop out or not participate. As a group, authors mapped each of the reasons to SDT or prosocial motivators. Collectively authors then identified ways to modify each faculty development program to leverage the principles of SDT and prosocial motivation to appeal to more faculty. This ranged from connecting faculty to beneficiaries of their efforts, emphasizing collective or group goals, or relying on transformational or deeply inspiring leaders who connect faculty goals with institutional priorities. For intrinsic motivation, this included maximizing autonomy (or volition of faculty), relatedness (including relevance), and competence (or promoting faculty's self-efficacy in the professional development).

Discussion: Through an enhanced understanding of SDT and prosocial motivation concepts, authors were able to identify ways to enhance their faculty development programs to appeal to their faculty. Authors were able to successfully map their faculty development activities to SDT and prosocial motivators allowing them to begin thinking about the constructs of prosocial and intrinsic motivation as they continuously revise their offerings. This exercise allowed authors to think creatively about molding faculty development to align with the prosocial and intrinsic motivation of their faculty. Authors hope that this exercise can serve as a model for others to help enhance their own faculty development offerings.