

Notes from Open Space Topic Convenors

What was your topic or question?

How can students make a difference in the thinking of their fellow students, professors, and physicians in terms of accepting the idea of blended medicine?

What were major discussion points?

- Identify the challenges students will face.
- Students have been taught to stay out of the way in the hospital.
- Nurses are more likely to suggest alternative therapies.
- The prevailing health care culture doesn't allow alternative thinking.
- Alternative medicine is not taught in school; and if it is, it isn't taught well.
- The current system needs to be supported, and alternative medicine needs to be blended in.
- While people claim they need research before using alternative medicine, evidence is not necessarily the reason for their resistance.
- Current drug studies should be carefully evaluated before recommending therapy.
- Allopathics and alternatives both want nothing to do with each other.

What did you learn?

- Let your intentions be known *quietly* at first; identify others who share your beliefs and outlooks, and then let it grow.
- Suggesting that a curriculum or hospital program should be changed suggests a fault or a void: be careful in how you make your suggestion.
- If patients are requesting an alternative therapy, students should present it as such to their attending physicians.
- Listen to the patient: ask what has worked for him or her in the past through open-ended questions.
- Students need to take the first step because professors and physicians are too busy.
- Look for people within the current system who have made changes, and ask them for help and advice.
- Understand the value of the beginner's mind ... don't be afraid to ask, "WHY?"
- Teach other med students if you are an expert ... they'll listen to you.
- Choose your helpers *wisely* ... and **keep knocking** at their doors.

Whom should we contact for more information?

Name: Allan Sison (Tufts University School of Medicine, Class of 2005)
Telephone: 617-536-5532
Address: 137 Peterborough Street, Apt. 3
Boston, MA 02215
Email: e_allan.sison@tufts.edu