

Gold Tokens of Humanity: Using visual memoirs to reconnect and heal the heart of healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a negative toll on patient well-being with increasing social isolation during hospitalizations due to infectious disease containment protocols. For example, daily visitor restrictions have contributed to increased distress to patients and families. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the healthcare workforce, leading to PTSD, compassion fatigue, and burnout among medical providers and non-clinical staff. The Gold Tokens of Humanity is a new, multi-year initiative started by the CUSOM Gold Humanism Honor Society enabling medical students to provide social visits to patients identified by the primary medical teams to get to know the person and family beyond the patient, and if the moment feels right, create HIPAA compliant visual tokens. These Gold Tokens come in the form of photographs, drawings, and paintings that represent the core value(s) of our patients and are created at bedside through the use of portable photo printers. Gold Tokens aim to reaffirm our common humanity, promote healing of patients by getting to know them as people, not simply their myriad illnesses, and to unify our student body through narrative medicine. Through our activities, we hope Gold Tokens will rejuvenate the heart of healthcare by reinforcing the values that recruited us into this profession.