

dear residents

Here We Go Again

December 26, 2021

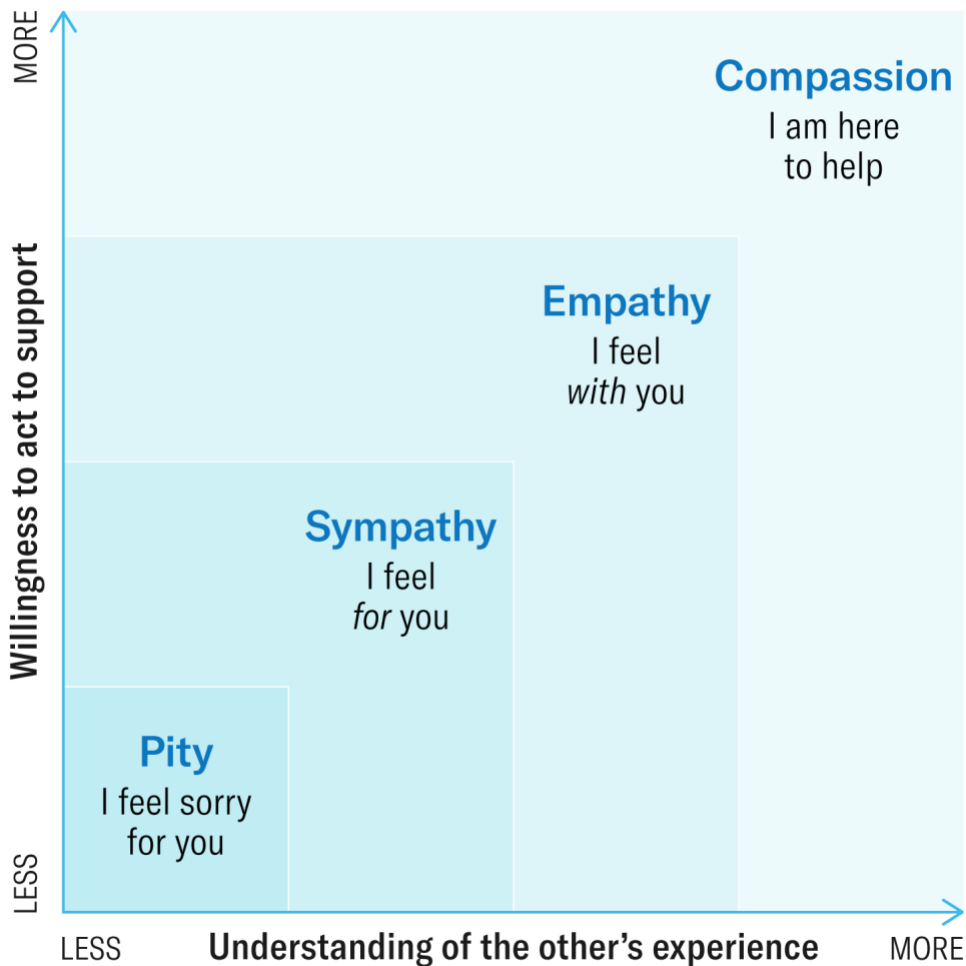
Dear Residents,

I hope you have enjoyed some time off. I also hope that those of you set to have time off this week will also find it restful and enjoyable. I realize that travel plans may have been disrupted and that you may have had to settle for other ways of celebrating. Sadly, the 4th COVID-19 surge is upon us. Delta seems like a distant event as Omicron, the faster spreading viral strain, is upon us even quicker than I thought it would be. A few of you have already had breakthrough infections. I hope that your symptoms are mild and that you will recover soon. I expect that there will be some disruptions to your schedules. We will do our best to minimize these. As Omicron spreads, I anticipate that we will be taking care of more inpatients. My hope is that there will be an uncoupling between infections and hospitalizations, since vaccinated individuals are less likely to experience severe illness, but I do worry that the sheer number of infections may overwhelm our hospitals. Protecting your health and your education will remain my priorities.

Besides the advantage of vaccination, there are two new monoclonal antibodies and two oral agents that could be soon available and may help prevent hospitalization. The CDC has shortened isolation for healthcare workers from 10 to 7 days (and 5 for contingencies). Rapid testing should become more available. Events are moving speedily, and it is dizzying to keep up and make sensible precautionary and therapeutic decisions. Could Omicron be the [Beginning of The End](#)? Time will tell.

I know that this is a time for holidays and celebration – yet our profession never rests. Nowhere has the impact of the pandemic been harder than on healthcare professionals. We have been described as the “frontline,” when in reality most of our work is as the “rearguard” for those who are ill enough to require inpatient care. The residency program knows how to adapt and succeed even when times get very tough. You have demonstrated astonishing agility, and I expect that you will flex and recalibrate as the situation calls for. While we have postponed the January firm events, we will reconvene them as soon as we can. This is a time to lead with compassion. Let your patients and your colleagues know that you are here to help.

Compassion Goes Beyond Sympathy and Empathy



Source: Potential Project



The “emotional labor” that you will expend in serving your patients and helping your colleagues will only be possible with sufficient time allocated for self-care. Please do prioritize nutrition, exercise, and sleep. I know that there are precious few hours when you are not occupied by your work – use this time wisely. It is heartwarming that so many of you have made yourselves available for emergency coverage. Thank you. We will avail of your generosity wisely.



Photo by [Jessica Podraza](#) on [Unsplash](#)

I feel so grateful to be leading such big-hearted warriors dedicated to the greater good.

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