

An Invitation to Attend a Student Balint Group on Tuesdays at 6.30pm

- Are there times when medical student life can be a bit overwhelming?
- Would you like to have a safe, confidential, supportive space to think about your work?
- Would it help with some of the more confusing emotional experiences that you may be encountering in contact with patients?

Balint groups often called reflective practice groups for medical students have a long history in UK, USA, France, Germany, Scandinavia and Brazil.

They have been proven to have significant benefits for students in better understanding the nature of the doctor/ patient, student /patient relationship. Only recently have Australian and New Zealand medical students had access to Balint groups.

In 2014 Sydney University Northern ran the inaugural evaluated **Australian 'Balint for Medical Students' Group** The students who took part, valued having a place to think about the impact of their clinical work and their experiences in the role of medical student.

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What is a Student Balint Group?

- It consists of 6-8 students who commit to meet regularly to discuss aspects of the student -patient relationship.
- Meetings are fortnightly on Tuesday evenings at 6.30pm and last for ninety minutes
- Case presentations are made without notes and no records are kept.
- The group will be facilitated by a psychologist /psychotherapist who is an Accredited Balint Group Leader and a Senior Psychiatrist
- Run by Zoom Video conferencing software
- A Zoom invitation to attend will be sent to you before each session . It will contain a link on which you click in order to obtain entrance to the Zoom meeting room .
- You will need to have downloaded the Zoom software which is free .

All discussions within the group are completely confidential and are not in any way linked to your medical school assessment .

Why should I join?

- Have a different experience from the rest of the curriculum?
- Supportive potentially enjoyable peer review environment
- Refresh your empathy
- Enrich your clinical work.

What can a Group achieve?

- This group provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your work
- It provides an outlet for anxieties and frustrations generated by your work by listening to different ideas and other perspectives.
- It provides a 'safe place' for exploring the challenges – professional and emotional – that you may be expected to deal with as a medical student in contact with patients and other medical professionals.
- It can help you to think differently about an encounter with a patient or situation you have previously found "difficult"
- It can help you realise the value of the student role
- It can be a valuable forum for discussing the difficulties – including 'boundary' issues – that arise when dealing with seriously ill patients who are facing their own emotional challenges.
- The group can be a place to share and come to terms with situations you might have found difficult to handle, while in the process of developing your own professional identity, such as affronts to your ideal of the doctor/patient relationship.
- Confidential discussion of such issues in a safe and supportive environment can help minimize their impact – sometimes by changing our perceptions of what's going on, in the light of others' experiences.
- Talking about our clinical work and experiences, can enrich our work and help us understand our patients more.

You can expect this will be different from anything you have had so far but which has been very helpful to many medical students and doctors both in present as well as the past.

Want to know more ? Contact alexagilbertobart@gmail.com

Alexa Gilbert-Obrart
BSc(Hons) MSc C.Psychol AFBPsS (UK) MAPS (Aust)
BSANZ Accredited Leader/ Trainer Balint UK Accredited Leader
Consulting Psychologist/Psychotherapist in Private Practice
Chair Balint in Medical Schools Collaborative Strategy Group
Co -curator BSANZ Medical Student Reflective Essay Competition
Sydney Australia
Mob 0418633433 (Aust)

Dr Nick Kowalenko
FRACP
Nicholas.Kowalenko@health.nsw.gov.au

