To start off 2018, we would like to reflect on the importance of a healthy learning climate. While we work at a phenomenal institution, full of innovation and compassion, surveys highlight important areas for improvement that are critical to address to support trainee excellence and wellness. The learning climate is a complex system with multiple micro-environments and varied participants. Yet, there are actions that all participants can take that will ensure that we work and learn in an environment that is universally respectful and fosters excellence.

Why is the learning climate important?
The learning climate has been shown to affect patient safety, healthcare worker wellness and burnout, faculty evaluations, and influence professional development and fulfillment. The learning climate in medical education has been a subject of study since 1929, when it was first published that medical schools were notorious for student mistreatment. Thus, embedded in our medical training culture is a system which includes mistreatment as an expectation of training. These behaviors have been transferred to our hospital environments and include all staff that work in these areas. Our high stress work environments and the increasingly diverse workforce have intensified issues and added a layer of nuance to the forms of mistreatment to include microaggressions. Recent climate surveys indicate that Stanford continues to have a problem with mistreatment, including public humiliation and microaggressions.

Fortunately, there is much we all can do to support a healthy learning climate. Here are some of the ways you can support all learners at Stanford.

1. **Understand your role in the learning climate**: As participants in the learning setting, we all must model and uphold expectations and best practices and be vigilant in creating and maintaining a zero-tolerance environment.

   **Mistreatment**: Role modeling respectful behaviors is critical. Public humiliation in any form is not acceptable, and criticizing colleagues in public is not appropriate. Think carefully about teaching style. While instilling knowledge and providing feedback on performance are vital teaching goals, pointing out communication flaws on rounds are not helpful. Fostering a judge-free environment promotes questioning and deeper learning.
**Microaggressions**: It is important to appreciate our own biases and how these impact our interactions with others. Please reflect on your own biases by taking an implicit assessment test (IAT). We ALL have biases and we cannot know how these influence others, so be open to someone telling you that a statement or joke you made is not appropriate to them. Apologize and move on.

2. **Act**: If you witness an incident it is crucial to make an immediate public acknowledgement of the incident with a no acceptance policy. For instance, “that joke was biased towards one’s political affiliations and is inappropriate.”

3. **Debrief**: It is important to follow public responses with a private debrief for both the “aggressor” and “receiver”. Not discussing incidents was listed as one of the most common aspects of an “unsafe” learning climate and an important driver of low morale. Everyone realizes that incidents will happen despite the best prevention strategies, therefore allowing those involved to process the incident and move on is viewed as one of the most important strategies in the reaction. Be a good listener and follow up.

4. **Report**: It is everyone’s responsibility to report an incident. If a learner is involved in an incident, please contact Becky Blankenburg, Hayley Gans, or Carrie Rassbach. For faculty mistreatment issues, please contact Eric Sibley or Mary Leonard.

5. **Acknowledge the Work of Others**: Acts of appreciation and kindness are simple and impactful.

6. **No Harassment of Any Kind**: Do not berate others or make jokes about any personal characteristics or affiliations such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or political and/or religious affiliation. Do not ask trainees to run errands/pick up food/coffee, etc. It is a violation of School of Medicine policy.

7. **Educate your Faculty and Other Personnel**. During a meeting, share the attached PowerPoint or invite Hayley Gans, Director of Fellowship Education and Carrie Rassbach, Associate Program Director for the Pediatric Residency Program to present on the topic. We are happy to attend team, faculty, and program meetings to share information and discuss strategies for handling incidents.