

# LEARNING FROM THOSE IN THE TRENCHES: A Qualitative Study to Understand the Experience of Pediatric Residents Who Have Undergone Remediation

Christine Cahaney, MD<sup>1</sup>; Capri Alex, BS<sup>1</sup>; Emily Kramer, MD<sup>2</sup>; Elizabeth Nelsen, MD<sup>3</sup>; David Mills, MD<sup>4</sup>; Nate Goodrich, MD<sup>5</sup>; Su-Ting T. Li, MD, MPH<sup>6</sup>; Nicola Orlov, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>

1. University of Chicago, 2. Nationwide Children's Hospital, 3. SUNY Upstate, 4. Medical University of South Carolina, 5. University of Nebraska, 6. University of California Davis

## Background

- ~ 12% of pediatric residents require formal remediation during training.
- Limited literature exists to support programs through the remediation process.
- We previously performed a national survey of program directors (PDs) to develop a conceptual model of effective remediation; however, our work lacked the perspective of the most important stakeholder: The Resident.
- No studies to date have explored the experience of those who have undergone remediation.

## Objective

To better understand the experiences of pediatric residents who have undergone remediation with the goal of improving our conceptual model for remediation

## Methods

- APPD Special Projects Grant was awarded.
- A semi-structured interview guide was developed by the research team, which comprised of a group of medical educators and trainees; it was then piloted on learners who had undergone remediation.
- Eleven qualitative interviews of current and recently graduated (in last 3 years) pediatric residents who had undergone remediation were conducted.
- De-identified transcripts were inductively analyzed by the research team using thematic analysis.
- These themes were then compared to the previously developed theoretical framework derived from the national survey of PDs.



Figure 1: Previously Designed Conceptual Model for Resident Remediation published in Academic Pediatrics (Oct 2024)

## Results

Table 1: Representative Quotes from Residents

Theme	Quotes
Remediation Disclosure	"The people who are going to be delivering this news...need to be the kindest people in the world."
	"I ideally would have liked to have the meeting with somebody who knew me and...from a perspective of 'I care about you', not 'you're in trouble' ... but it just was like, 'here's what you're bad at' with people who did not know me at all."
Development of an individualized Remediation Plan	"It was not an organized plan. I felt super anxious and like... at any moment I was going to get fired and lose everything I ever worked for."
	"I almost wish it had just been like, 'if you do this and meet this, like you're fine', but I just felt really in the dark."
	"I felt like they did really try to work with me on what was going to be most helpful... they were good about listening to me and taking my feedback."
Paucity of objective data to support need for remediation	"So they did have concrete feedback from attendings about my performance on rounds, presentations, my notes, whatever. ...but... they kept giving the same few examples of times that, like, Yeah, I knew I screwed up there. I knew that was not my best performance."
	"And you know that... that feeling then that there may not be so much concrete evidence, but everyone just somehow knows and feels that I'm not performing well in some way, myself included."
	"I didn't... disagree with their assessments that I was not at par. But it did feel cheapened by just like every single time bringing up that one instance where I couldn't remember, pneumonia antibiotic dosing."
Unclear understanding of the remediation process	"I don't know that anyone ever used the word remediation. I did get extra help and had to meet with the program director and all that. I think it was...remediation, but for formality sake, I don't know if anyone labeled it that."
	"I think having a written, printed out plan on paper including what objectives need to be met and what the plan is to meet them, is probably the most helpful thing, because the scariest feeling is feeling in the dark."
Lack of explicit outcomes	"More concrete goals, more positive updates, or here's a small moment that we can learn from and improve. Yeah, just more concrete, anything. It felt very nebulous."
	"I agreed in the sense that I felt that I had checked all their boxes. ...but as to whether I felt improved after the process... no, I don't think so."
Negative emotional reactions	"When you see someone at a weak position, like pointed or labeled, you are magnifying everything on that person, the mistakes that they are making and the pressure of your criticism on them. If you could remove that mean, toxic atmosphere...it would be better."
	"Just so much fear, there was so much fear."

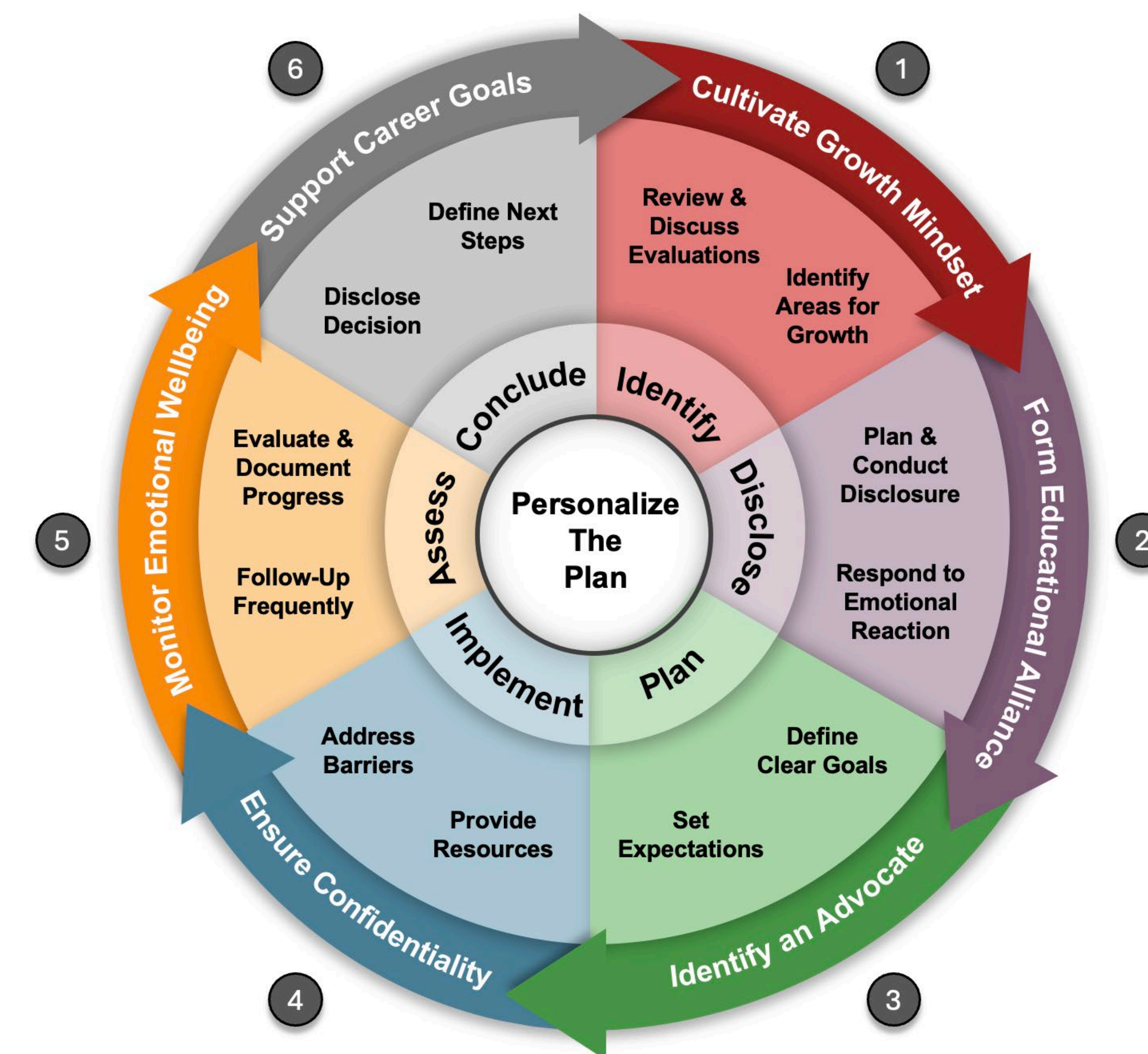


Figure 2: Enhanced Model Incorporating Resident Input

New insights from the resident interviews include:

- Emphasis on the importance of an intentional **disclosure** meeting when remediation is introduced and on the need for a decision on the **outcome** of the remediation process (Step 2 and Step 6)
- Lack of many important elements throughout the process: objective data to support the need for remediation; expectations of what the process entailed; explicit outcomes that determined completion of remediation
- How they experienced a multitude of negative emotions about themselves and their programs, which began from the time of disclosure

## Conclusions

- Gaining insight from residents who have undergone the process is essential to building a comprehensive approach to remediation.
- There are distinct elements at each step of the framework to help mitigate negative contributors to the emotional wellbeing of residents, which begins with creating a culture of growth within a training program.

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For inquiries/references please contact: christine.cahaney2@uchicagomedicine.org