



Dispensary Corner

PHARMACISTS should take part in improv comedy sessions to help relieve stress and improve their communications skills, a US pharmacy academic believes.

This is no joke - seriously!

Betty Derza, a 2020 PharmD candidate at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science College of Pharmacy in Illinois, has published a paper encouraging pharmacy professionals to get silly and "smile until your cheeks hurt".

"When you watch people perform improv comedy, you laugh the entire time," she said.

"As health care providers, we undergo a large amount of stress on a daily basis.

"When you enjoy a funny performance happening in front of you, you do not worry about all of the patients that you saw earlier in the day. Regularly smiling until your cheeks hurt can help prevent burnout."

The fast and unpredictable nature of improv is also perfect training for pharmacists, she added, because they regularly have to face unusual and unpredictable interactions with patients and colleagues within the healthcare professions.

"Improv comedy tends to be silly and unrealistic," Derza said.

"Thinking of scenarios like this improves creativity, which is vital in health care...sometimes medical professionals need to think outside the box to save lives."

Maybe hours spent at comedy nights could be counted for CPD points, with performers earning Group 3 points for their skills - or better still, could improv be funded under the 7CPA?

Shock UK pharmacy apprentice proposal

NEW British proposals to develop a five-year apprenticeship scheme for pharmacists have been blasted as "highly disruptive to the profession," according to a report in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

The plan was unveiled earlier this month by UK government body the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, after a submission by the Pharmacy Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group, an organisation representing a range of employers across the pharmacy sector including large retail chains, hospitals and pharmaceutical firms.

Still at a "very explorative stage," the proposal has been heavily criticised, with the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) saying it could lead to a "two-tier approach to qualifying as a pharmacist.

"It would shift the profession away from a professional university-led model to a model traditionally associated with technical occupations," PDA said.

First-year apprentices in England are paid a low minimum wage but employers must fund university degree fees on their behalf.

Pharmacy schools would be "engaged in the process" if the proposals are further developed.

SafeScript concerns

INVESTMENT needs to be made to support drug addiction services ahead of mandatory real-time prescription monitoring in Victoria, in 2020, an academic believes.

Writing in *The Conversation*, Monash Addiction Research Centre Deputy Director, Suzanne Nielsen, warned the roll out of the SafeScript program could have unintended consequence, saying "we need to tread carefully".

"First, our health professionals and systems will need to be properly equipped to deal with the volume of people who will be identified by this program as needing support.

"And second, evidence from the United States tells us restricting access to prescription drugs may drive people towards using illicit drugs instead," she said.

Nielsen noted that while the system would flag concerns to GPs and pharmacists, many were not confident talking about sensitive topics like substance abuse.

"A doctor may choose to prescribe drug treatments, such as buprenorphine, for dependence to strong pain medicines," she said.

"They may also decide to refer the patient to a pain service, or a drug treatment service.

"But where there are likely to be a greater volume of patients referred to these services, there are also significant concerns around access.

"In Australia, there is a need to double the capacity of alcohol and drug treatment services to meet current needs," Nielsen warned, adding that meant that if a referral was made there could be delays in accessing care.



Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is



Kimberley Nieuwenhuize, Digital Marketing Specialist at instigo pharmacy consulting.

Creating content for your pharmacy's social media

HAVING a social media presence for your pharmacy is one thing, but making sure it stays updated consistently with relevant content is really where you start seeing rewards. Your social media profile should be an extension of your physical pharmacy; posting regular content shows current and potential customers that you are open for business!

Content is the most effective when it is sociable, emotive, relatable and personal. You want to illicit a reaction from your audience that encourages them to engage with and connect to your pharmacy, and keeps your brand front of mind. You also want to stand out from the crowd. Remember, your customer's news feed is likely to be full of posts from their friends, family and other brands, so being different and memorable is crucial to being noticed in a busy news feed.

Posting photos is the best place to start when it comes to creating unique social media content. Customers love content with very personal touches, so staff profiles, birthday celebrations, and photos of engagement with the wider community are all great starting points for a fantastic post.

If you want to use your social media to advertise products and services, share a photo of a staff member holding the product or demonstrating the service for your own personalised advertisement.



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