

GRAND ROUNDS



Thursday, September 25, 2025

Location: Zoom (*RSVP for link*)

4:30pm- 6:00pm EST

RSVP [here](#) or to

bioethics@stonybrookmedicine.edu

The Fluff of Medicine: The Intangibles that Make the Difference

Salvatore Mangione, MD

What makes the ideal physician is something we all grapple with since the very first day of medical school. Renowned ethicist Edmund Pellegrino tried to answer that question in a JAMA article of 50 years ago, where he boiled it down to three C's: Competence, Compassion, and Culture. We all agree with competence and compassion, but what about *culture*? To me that rubric comprises seven personal qualities that are fundamental for the physician's ability to unleash the self-healing energies of the patient, and they are: 1) Attentive (active) listening; 2) Eye contact; 3) Compassionate touch; 4) Empathy; 5) Comfort with ambiguity; 6) Humor (especially of the self-deprecating kind, since not only it lifts others but also prevents narcissism); and 7) A philosophy of life that by bordering on stoicism can provide *resilience*. Hence, this presentation will review these interpersonal traits, which are often considered 'fluff' by younger physicians, while in reality they are the intangibles that make all the difference.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- 1 To Revisit How Interpersonal Skills Affect Care
- 2 To Discuss Eye Contact, Empathy, Compassionate Touch, Attentive Listening, Tolerance for Ambiguity, Humor &; Wisdom
- 3 To Revisit Professional Identity



SALVATORE MANGIONE, MD, is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the SKMC of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, where he also directs the Humanities and History of Medicine courses. He is a clinician-educator with a long interest in physical diagnosis, medical history, community service and the role of the humanities in medicine. His innovative programs and engaging teaching style have been recognized by multiple teaching awards, and his work has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the BBC, CNN, NPR, and *Forbes*. Dr. Mangione has also been involved in asthma education, creating (and directing for six years) *The AsthmaBUS™*, a red doubledecker he bought in London in 1999, shipped to Philadelphia, and eventually outfitted so to provide asthma education and screening for 15,000 middle-school children. For this he received the 2001 *American Institute of Architects* Award for most innovative exhibit, the 2003 World Asthma Day community service award from Philadelphia, and the 2004 Governors Community Service Award by the Chest Foundation of the *American College of Chest Physicians*. Dr. Mangione has been an invited speaker at many national and international meetings, especially in regard to the use of visual arts for the teaching of observation. He's the author of the book *Secrets in Physical Diagnosis* and the recipient of the 2022 Nicholas E. Davies Memorial Scholar Award of the *American College of Physicians* for Scholarly Activities in the Humanities and History of Medicine.

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