

GRAND ROUNDS

Thursday, September 16, 2021

Location: Zoom- Please [RSVP](#) for link

4:30pm- 6:00pm

The Art and Science of Compassion

Agnes Wong, MD, PhD, FRCSC

Compassion is both innate and a trainable skill that can be cultivated to promote flourishing in medical students and physicians. In this talk, Dr. Wong will clarify the difference between empathy and compassion, explain why compassion fatigue is a misnomer, and suggest that empathy fatigue/empathic distress are better terms to describe the exhaustion we experience when self-regulation is suboptimal. Based on the scientific principles of neuroplasticity, epigenetics, and inborn basic goodness, she will show the evidence supporting that mental training in the form mindfulness and lovingkindness practices can lead to many benefits, including better attention stability, meta-awareness, perspective-taking, and emotion regulation. Compassion is a boundless source of energy and resilience that not only benefits the receivers, but also enhances the givers' own well-being. It is an antidote to burnout that is widespread in healthcare. It is also an essential ingredient for a kinder, gentler society.



Dr. Agnes Wong is Professor of Ophthalmology, Neurology, & Psychology at the University of Toronto, and an active staff Ophthalmologist and Senior Scientist at The Hospital for Sick Children. She is the former Ophthalmologist-in-Chief at The Hospital for Sick Children, as well as the former Vice Chair of Research in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Toronto, where she held the inaugural John & Melinda Thompson Chair in Vision Neuroscience for a decade. In her career as a physician-scientist, Dr. Wong has published over 120 peer-reviewed papers in the field of Ophthalmology and vision sciences, and held a number of prestigious research grants. She has travelled widely as a visiting professor and invited speaker, as well as won many research and teaching awards.

Dr. Wong received chaplaincy training from Roshi Joan Halifax, PhD at the Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe USA. She also completed intensive teacher training in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy with its cofounder, Dr. Zindel Segal at the University of Toronto. She is currently on faculty of the Mindfulness & Compassion Training for Health & End-of-Life Care Professionals program at the Sarana Institute in Toronto. Dr. Wong's current work focuses on well-being, integrating mindfulness, compassion, and reflective practices as tools for healthcare professionals to maintain and enhance their own well-being, as well as to improve the system. Her most recent book "The Art and Science of Compassion. A Primer—Reflections of a Physician-Chaplain" has recently been published by Oxford University Press.

Please RSVP [here](#) or to
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