Case

- Your intern admitted a patient with pneumonia and symptoms of heroin withdrawal. She did a very cursory workup, and did not treat the patient’s withdrawal symptoms at all. When you question her, she says: “What’s the point? She is just going to leave AMA anyway. I don’t have time for this.”
You point out the importance of managing withdrawal symptoms in an acutely ill patient and offer to review the management of heroin withdrawal with her.

Your intern rolls her eyes.
What is the diagnosis?
The Reluctant Learner: Assessing “Readiness to Learn”
CRIT/FIT 2014

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Goals of the session:

- Define Reluctant Learner
- “Diagnose” the reluctant learner
- Discuss effective approaches to engage the reluctant learner
The Reluctant Learner

• Definition:
  – A learner who appears not to be eager, willing and ready to learn what you want to teach
The Reluctant Learner

How do you know when you have one?
• Examples of reluctant learners...
• Examples of reluctant learners…
  – The Know It All
  – The Minimizer
  – Passive-Aggressive
  – The Lazy Learner
  – Excuses, excuses…
  – Not my job!
  – Disinterested/Bored
  – The Head Bobber
Why the “reluctance”? 
The Reluctant Learner

• Definition:
  – A learner who appears not to be eager, willing and ready to learn what you want to teach
Reluctance is not a permanent personality “trait”, but a modifiable “state”
Approach the reluctant learner as you would a “clinical case”
STEP 1 - Diagnose the Problem

STEP 2 - Treat the Problem

STEP 3 - Get a Consult
1- Diagnose the Problem
The Learning Process

TEACHER  ↔  LEARNER

CONTENT
1- Diagnose the Problem:

- Diagnose the Learner: Take a history…

“ASK”
ASK - Does the learner:

- **Have a problem with **_**Attitude**?**
  - judgmental
  - “bleeding heart” who can’t set limits

- **Lack **_**Skill**?**
  - unable to put knowledge to practical use
  - uncomfortable asking the questions

- **Lack **_**Knowledge**?**
  - clinical relevance of material
  - missing some “background information”
The Learning Process

TEACHER  ←  LEARNER

CONTENT
### “Find the Lesion” for Educators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Learner</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appears Bored</td>
<td>Too longwinded?</td>
<td>Post-call?</td>
<td>Clinical relevance not clear?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monotone?</td>
<td>Just reviewed this with the CR?</td>
<td>Background knowledge missing?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Distracted with sick pt? Life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know it All</td>
<td>Intimidating?</td>
<td>Does not grasp what is truly relevant?</td>
<td>Too basic?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or tentative?</td>
<td>Afraid to admit deficiency?</td>
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2- Treat the Problem:
“The Therapeutic Trial”
STEP 2 – Treat the Problem: “The Therapeutic Trial”

• It usually takes more than one try
• Keep the focus on the behavior
• Keep your goal realistic
Diagnosis and Treatment Options:

- **PROBLEM:**

<table>
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<th>Possible Dx</th>
<th>Possible Rx</th>
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“The Therapeutic Trial”

• Treatment Options:
Principles of Motivational Interviewing (MI):

- Engage
- Focus
- Evoke
- Plan
Principles of Managing Interns:

• Engage- To connect, empathy
• Focus- Prioritize, agree on topic
• Evoke - Discrepancy
• Plan – Shared responsibility, acceptable, do-able
STEP 3 – Get a Consult:

• Other colleagues
• Program Director
• Clerkship Director
“Stages of Change” for the Reluctant Learner

Pre-contemplation

- “I already know all I need to”

Contemplation

- “There may be a better way, but I am doing fine”

Determination

- “There are some skills that I can learn”
- “Mastering these skills will make me a better doctor”
“Stages of Change” for the Reluctant Learner

Pre-contemplation

Contemplation

Determination

“I already know all I need to”

“There may be a better way, but I am doing fine”

“There are some skills that I can learn”

“Mastering these skills will make me a better doctor”
RECOVERY

- Fatigue
- Burn out
- Personal issues
- Substance use

RELAPSE

“I can do this”
Take Home Points:

• “Reluctance is in the eye of the beholder”

• The same systematic approach and the same skills that work with “reluctant” patients, work with “reluctant” learners