

# CHALLENGING TEACHER-LEARNER INTERACTIONS

*When Differences Become Problems*

*Mary Lindholm, MD and Kathleen Barry, M.D*

# Objectives

***By the end of the session you will:***

- Describe the major categories of learning problems
- Recognize the value of using “SOAP” to assess and address challenging learning situations
- Feel more comfortable handling challenging teacher-learner situations
- Feel more confident identifying learners in need of consultation



## What is a “*challenging learner*?”

What do you think of when you hear the term

*challenging learner*?

Please share in the chat.



University of  
Massachusetts  
Medical School  
[umassmed.edu](http://umassmed.edu)

What is a “*challenging learner*?”

“Struggling learner?”



University of  
Massachusetts  
Medical School  
[umassmed.edu](http://umassmed.edu)

# What do clinicians do with a challenging clinical problem?

- Subjective – what do you hear?
- Objective – what's the data? What do you observe?
- Assessment – Is this cognitive, metacognitive, affective or relational
- Plan – what are you going to do?



# Subjective

What are your sources of subjective data about a learner?

- Self assessment
- Other impressions



# Subjective

- How do others describe *challenging learners* to you?
- How do these learners present?

*Please use the chat to list a word or phrase that you've heard  
used to describe challenging learners*



# Objective

- Identify specific behaviors and their frequency

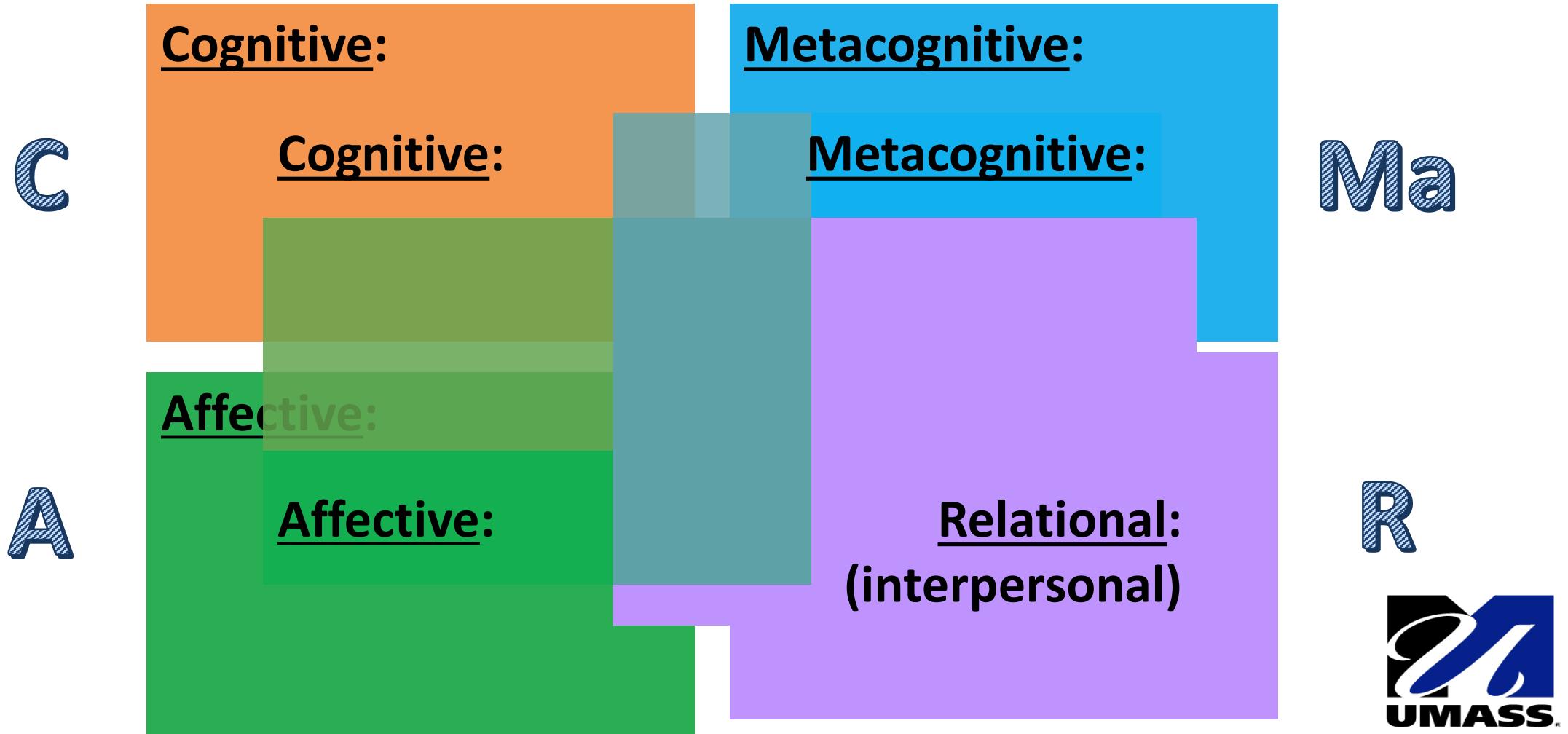
# Objective

- Seek more objective information
  - Where?
  - What is your threshold for seeking more info?
  - What other information do you want?
  - Where do you find that information?



# Assessment Framework: CARMA

Four Domains concept: Vaughn LM, et al. Teaching and Learning in Medicine 1998;10(4):217-22.



# *Assessment:* Academic or Cognitive

## **Cognitive:**

- Knowledge Base
- Problem Solving Skills
- Language (written, verbal)
- Visual Perception and Processing
- Memory



## Cognitive:

- Knowledge Base
- Problem Solving Skills
- Language (written, verbal)
- Visual
- Memory

## Metacognitive:

- Organization
- Time Management
- Attention/motivation
- Study skills and strategies
- Test taking skills and strategies

## Affective:

- Psych: Depression, anxiety, OCD, substance abuse, “burnout”
- Adjusting to environment
- Career ambivalence
- Other medical issues
- Social issues: family, support
- Life events, other distractions

## Relational:

# Assessment: Affective

## **Affective:**

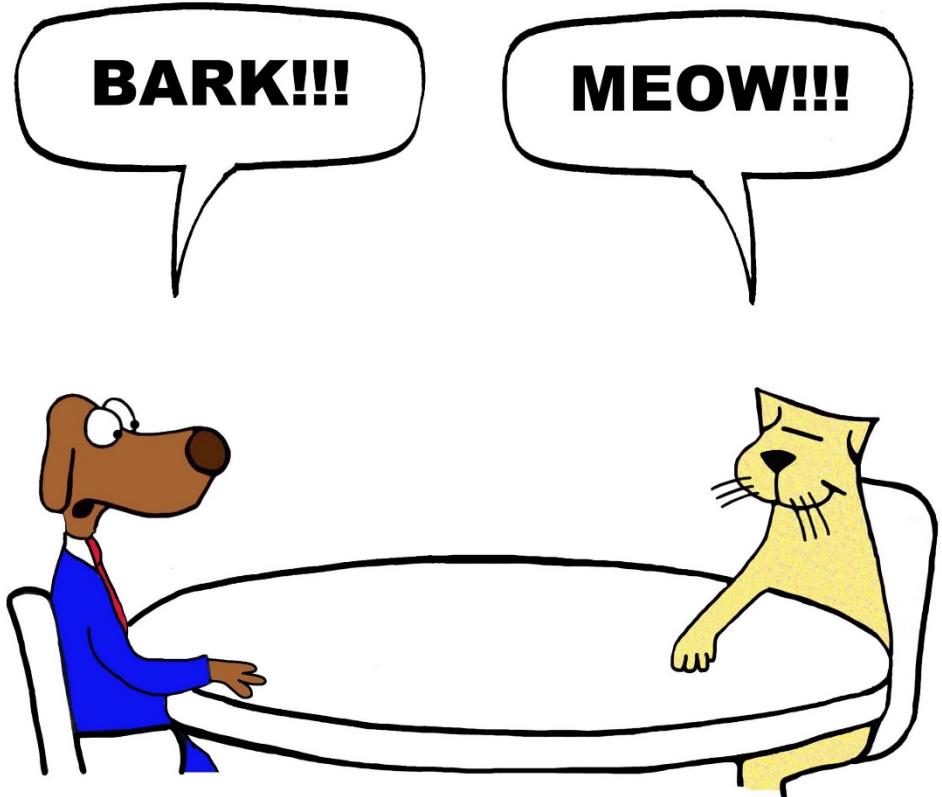
- **Psych:**
  - Depression, anxiety, OCD, substance abuse, “burnout”
- **Adjusting to environment**
- **Career ambivalence**
- **Other medical issues**
- **Social issues:**
  - Family, support, life events, other distractions

## **4 duties:**

- Identify (diagnose)
- Consider Referral
- Strategize
- Program director



# Assessment: Relational



**They had a tendency to talk past one another.**

- Interpersonal
- Communication skills (argumentative, generational)
- Cultural/shy/non-assertive
- Mismatch between environment, teachers and learners
- Unprofessional behavior

# *Assessment:* Unprofessional Behaviors

- What are some unprofessional behaviors you have seen?
- What makes this so challenging?

## *Assessment:*

# Unprofessional Behaviors

- Your emotional response
- Possibility of 'different values'
- Expectations weren't clear
- Enduring characteristic or 'bad day'
- Uncovering underlying reasons
- Not enough objective data
- Evaluation typically focuses on cognitive



## Cognitive:

- Knowledge Base
- Problem Solving Skills
- Language (written, verbal)
- Visual
- Memory

## Metacognitive:

- Organization
- Time Management
- Attention/motivation
- Study skills and strategies
- Test taking skills and strategies

## Affective:

## Relational:

# Assessment:

## Metacognitive

- Organization
- Time Management
- Attention/motivation
- Study skills and strategies
- Test taking skills and strategies



**C**

## **Cognitive:**

- Knowledge Base
- Problem Solving Skills
- Language (written, verbal)
- Visual
- Memory

**M**

## **Metacognitive:**

- Organization
- Time Management
- Attention/motivation
- Study skills and strategies
- Test taking skills and strategies

**A**

## **Affective:**

- Psych: Depression, anxiety, OCD, substance abuse, “burnout”
- Adjusting to environment
- Career ambivalence
- Other medical issues
- Social issues: family, support
- Life events, other distractions

**R**

## **Relational:**

- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Cultural/shy/non-assertive
- Mismatch between environment, teachers and learners

# Plan

- Gather more data
  - What skills or behaviors are lacking?
  - Observation and collaboration
- Provide Feedback
- Collaborate on an educational plan
  - learner and other supervisors
  - relationship building
- Revaluation



*Plan:*

## Critical issues to consider

- How much confidentiality is a learner entitled to?
- When is a teacher entitled to more information about a learner who is having difficulties?
- Do we have a diagnostic or therapeutic relationship with learners?



# IT'S YOUR TURN!!

## Challenging learner cases