

Deliverable 1: Generating Insights

Executive Summary:

A powerful, unifying theme that emerges from all stakeholder perspectives is the critical importance of empathetic and effective communication from physicians, especially during difficult conversations. For patients and their families, this is a fundamental need that can profoundly impact their emotional well-being and ability to cope with a diagnosis. For healthcare professionals like doctors and social workers, this skill is essential for building trust and ensuring a smooth patient journey. From an institutional perspective, the Mayo Clinic's reputation and financial stability are directly tied to its ability to deliver this high standard of compassionate care.

While all stakeholders agree on the importance of empathy, their primary focus differs, revealing key opportunity areas. Doctors are concerned with the personal challenge of consistently providing empathetic care and the need for tools to develop this skill without leading to burnout. The Research and Education department, in turn, seeks a scalable and effective method to teach these complex interpersonal skills. This convergence of needs points directly to a significant opportunity: the creation of an advanced AI-powered tool. Such a tool could provide dynamic and personalized coaching for physicians, allowing them to practice and refine their communication techniques in a safe, repeatable environment. This would not only fulfill the educational and professional development needs within the Mayo Clinic but would directly address the core need of patients and families for clear, compassionate communication, ultimately enhancing patient care and solidifying the clinic's reputation.

User/Stakeholder	Need	Insight
Doctors - Ethan	Need to be able to provide each patient an opportunity to be heard and to be able to foster a sense of connection. They also need to be able to develop this skill into a repeatable behavior that can be implemented, iterated, and improved throughout their daily duties as well as throughout their career. [1]	As the central figure of a patient's healthcare experience, it is vital for a doctor to be able to help the patient feel comfortable with them and to be able to foster a culture of honesty, clarity, and communication. The ability to empathize with a patient well will allow for more uplifting, informative, and open communication with the patient, which will then, in turn, create a better treatment

		experience for all involved. Focusing on ways to avoid burnout from employing these practices should be a top priority in the development of a tool to aid in these efforts.
Mayo: Research and Education -Alex	Need a tool that can help to train medical students, healthcare professionals, etc, on complex human interactions	Mayo Clinic has three main missions: clinical practice, education, and research. [2] Currently, Mayo uses a combination of different approaches to teach their medical students empathy and what a proper patient-to-clinician experience should look like, using simulations as well as a basic step-by-step process to approaching situations (SAFER model, PEARLS, SPIKES, etc.) [3]. Creating an AI tool that offers both dynamic and passive coaching could be hugely beneficial to the progression of Mayo's Education and Research Department.
Patient Friends and Family - Tanner	Need a doctor who can deliver news with clarity, patience, and compassion, answering their questions and acknowledging their fear and grief.	Friends and family are not just passive observers; they are the core support system and often the primary caregivers for a patient after a difficult diagnosis. When a doctor is perceived as cold or detached, it amplifies the family's trauma and can make them feel isolated and helpless. The insight is that empathetic communication from a doctor is a form of care for the entire family unit, empowering them to navigate a new reality with resilience

		and confidence. [4]
Hospice Social Worker specializing in patient and family counseling - Elijah	Needs physicians to be skilled in initiating and navigating conversations about a patient's values and end-of-life goals, not just delivering a terminal diagnosis.	The initial conversations led by a physician can set the tone for the entire end-of-life journey. When these conversations are handled with detachment or delay, it creates trauma and crisis that support staff, like social workers, must then work to repair. An empathetic, value-centered approach from the physician should act as a handoff to the emotional care team. [5]
Mayo Clinic (Compay) - Ian	Physicians and social workers who are skilled in delivering hard news in an empathetic way to promote and elevate the reputation of the company.	Mayo Clinic is seen as one of, if not the best, clinics in the world. They are known for their professionalism so it is imperative that they are able to make sure their physicians are working diligently to create a positive patient care environment. If they fail in this regard, they could lose a large amount of funding, which is crucial for their survival as they are a nonprofit company. An AI that can help make patients feel even more well taken care of would mean a boost in potential revenue and, therefore, lead to even better patient care. [6]

Reference

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- [3] "Lend an EAR Learning Modules » Mayo Clinic Employee Mental Health and Well-Being," <https://mentalhealthandwellbeing.mayo.edu/>. Accessed: Sep. 12, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://mentalhealthandwellbeing.mayo.edu/lend-an-ear-learning-modules/>
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