



SCHOOL

Course report

Foundations of Leadership in Radiation Oncology

19 – 24 May 2021, online

Course directors:

- *Kim Benstead, clinical oncologist, Gloucestershire Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust, Cheltenham (UK)*
- *Meredith Giuliani, radiation oncologist, Princess Margaret Cancer Center, Toronto (Canada)*
- *Sandra Turner, radiation oncologist, Westmead Hospital, Sydney (Australia)*

A clinician's perspective:

Could you please briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Austin Sim and I'm currently a chief resident in radiation oncology at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, USA. I also currently serve as the chair of the Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology under the American Society for Radiation Oncology.

Why did you choose to attend this course? (please mention if it's your European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) course)

After my experience in law school, I realised that medicine lags behind other professional industries in terms of formal leadership education. With or without official titles, we are expected to lead healthcare teams both within and outside our departments, but formal training is often lacking. One of the reasons for which I chose my residency programme was its emphasis on leadership; it includes a unique, longitudinal leadership course. I am always excited about such education opportunities and was thrilled to be selected for this course!

What aspects of the course were the most interesting and why?

The best part was definitely the small group exercises. Many of the concepts remain abstract without application and working through cases in small groups was invaluable to actually see how these concepts apply in real-world settings. The ability to interact with attendees of different disciplines, who were at different career points and working at different institutions in different countries, led to an especially rich experience, despite the virtual format.

Did the course activities improve your knowledge and skills in the relevant subject?

Absolutely! I was introduced to many of these concepts during our own institutional course, but as with most things, repetition and application of these concepts in new environments to new cases helped to solidify and refine these skills.

Did the course meet your expectations? If so, how?

Although I was disappointed not to meet the participants in person, the course was engaging and exceeded my expectations of a virtual meeting. The insights discovery tool was also instrumental in shaping how I approached the course material and in framing discussions.

List three important 'takeaways' following the course.

- Knowing and leading yourself is a critical prerequisite to lead others.
- Even without official leadership positions, we lead ourselves and others on a regular basis.
- As noted by others, leadership is a journey not a destination, and it requires constant honing of existing skillsets, much like the practice of medicine.

How will what you have learnt be implemented in your daily job/ clinical practice?

The main sessions focused on understanding one's personal leadership style, building effective teams, quality improvement, conflict management, and leading change/influence. All these aspects of leadership must be developed at all levels of training and practice in both official and unofficial leadership roles.

How would you encourage someone who has never been to an ESTRO course to join this course next year/ in two years?

This course provides a unique and eminently digestible introduction to key leadership concepts that are specifically tailored to radiation oncologists, physicists and radiation therapists. It also provided an excellent venue to meet and discuss topics with participants across the globe.



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