

Reflective Learning as an opportunity for self-directed and co-learning for healthcare professionals

Featuring:

Niraj Swami, CEO CMEfy

TRANSCRIPT

ANHI: Engage. Pause. Reflect. You might find yourself doing these three actions often throughout your day. For example, when your child goes to sleep at night, have you ever thought “is there anything I can do better tomorrow to help him prepare for school?” Or maybe, after cooking a delicious meal, have you paused and reflected upon what you might change the next time you cook the recipe? Or, as you complete a care plan for a new patient, have you paused to consider how new patient education materials that you recently saw may be uniquely useful for this patient? The three simple steps of engage, pause, and reflect are used often in both our personal and our professional lives to help us grow.

ANHI: Welcome to Abbott Nutrition Health Institute's, Power of Nutrition Podcast. My name is Ashley Bronston, and I'm with the Abbott Nutrition Health Institute. And I'm excited today to announce the topic of reflective learning.

ANHI: We are lucky today to have Niraj Swami. He is the CEO of CMEfy, and for those of you who aren't familiar with CMEfy, it's essentially a platform that allows clinicians to reflect on a learning activity and gain some continuing education credits.

ANHI: Welcome, Niraj.

Niraj: Thank you so much. I'm so glad to be here.

ANHI: Before we start, I should note that I'm recording in the studio while Niraj is dialing in from Chicago, so you may notice a small difference in the sound quality of our respective microphones.

ANHI: Niraj, I like to take a few minutes for our guests to properly introduce themselves. Would you mind taking a moment to tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

Niraj: Absolutely. So, I've been a serial entrepreneur. I've been building "tech" all my life in the space of learning, but the most relevant introduction I can give you here in this space is where I come from, and actually why this conversation really excites me. The topic of reflective learning, and the way you opened it, is share the stories of when we pause, when we reflect, actually hits home for me. I come from a family of clinicians; we've got surgeons in the family; we had our own hospital; my sister is a practicing endocrinologist – honestly, there's so many conversations from the context they find themselves in, talking and learning the genesis of what we're here to talk about – is the idea of reflective learning apart from design for that – a mindset that's designed to support that and actually work with great content experts such as you are. Glad to be here.

ANHI: Thank you for that, it is such a pleasure to have you with us today. Let's start with a foundational question. Can you tell us what reflective learning is and how it's evolving as a new platform for healthcare professional education?

Niraj: Absolutely, yeah. I think -- reflective learning isn't new, per se, to the idea of education. It's been around in other fields. Vienna Chess in the UK has leveraged this as a mechanism for understanding how clinicians are developing and growing over time, essentially writing essays. With CMEfy, and what we've really been focused on, is looking at a self-directed experience – really thinking about what happens when you encounter interesting concepts in your day-to-day and draw connections between those concepts and your work and your life. When you draw those connections, you're really – you're collecting and making sense of the world around you in a way that improves what you are doing – if it's delivering care, working with teammates, collaborating, it's being a better practitioner, and that's the genesis of reflective learning from a platform standpoint – from a standpoint of where we come from, and that's very exciting because that translates really nicely you have continuing education's evolving especially as it's happened over the last few years.

ANHI: Now, it sounds like there can be multiple benefits to health care practitioners with reflective learning education approach. Can you please further discuss the benefits of reflective learning versus maybe a more traditional continuing education approach?

Niraj: Absolutely. I think they work in tandem – they work as a team, and when it comes to reflective learning, specifically, we look at it as – it's about attention, not attendance. There's a lot of learning that happens – time based, classroom based, in a session that is the start of the hour, end of the hour, what did you learn? We've looked at it from different vantage points, and we know a lot of learning experiences, especially health care professionals nowadays face, aren't necessarily in the classroom. In just this podcast, this conversation we're having, there's a lot of podcasts for clinicians – in case of clinicians and healthcare professionals – learn with other healthcare professionals. When you change this learning modality, you can't

really put a transcript to it before the learning really happens. if you can build, or if you can assess – how you, as a learner, the healthcare professional, how you are spending your attention contained inside, that’s when reflections really translate that into some value. There’s all these things that spark that learning – you’ve got to translate that into what that really means for me as a practitioner – that’s where reflective learning comes in.

ANHI: Thank you, Niraj, for that. How is reflective learning recognized and included by health care professional credentialing organizations for CME or CE credits? And, also, who is eligible to participate in reflective learning to earn credit?

Niraj: That’s a great question, I think. It’s always been part of an evaluation process that makes a credit a credit, especially when it comes to accrediting bodies. The reflective evaluations are fairly new. They’re not new from the standpoint of understanding how somebody can capture those thoughts in an essay, understanding who they are, thinking about how they might apply knowledge in a long-form essay – just how and when they reflected is something that really didn’t emerge until the Pandemic happened, and people had (different context where they would reflect. So, from a PE or CME standpoint, really sits in a point of care position for us. We look at it as hey, you’re translating it to practice, you’re thinking, there’s processing, you’re really going through this mindset of translating your concept to practice, and that’s really how we’ve been able to build a technology versus content that is accredited – being able to build a technology that offers credit for when you capture clinical relevance of a concept to your work and translate it to practice. Specifically, with us and with CMEfy, our reflective activity that is provided underneath that entire technology can reward credits for physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician associates, dietitians, dentists, pharmacists, case managers, medical assistants, as well as athletic trainers. And I stress all these personas because the fact that it’s a team sport – it’s designed to serve all these individuals when they work together, and that’s a big piece of the puzzle. We’re –we’re championing the idea that continuing education, professional development is about taking the field forward, one individual at a time, and reflections are the fabric that tie them all together.

ANHI: From everything you’re saying, I am super excited to learn more about reflective learning. I love to hear about this type of learning versus the traditional model where you’re watching, say, an hour CE video or webinar, and you just listen to the program, you’re not really absorbing it – you might take a survey afterwards – but it sounds like, with this reflective learning, it really forces you to absorb the information and think how it could be applied. How does reflective learning relate to the broader concept of co-learning, and why specifically is co-learning important for health care workers do you think?

Niraj: An awesome viewpoint. For us, we need to take a step back and maybe define co-learning from our vantage point. It really is learning spark with another and through other colleagues and interactions you have

with people, concepts, technologies, entities that spark that learning and that idea of co-learning, where me thinking about something can spark my colleagues' thoughts about something, and together, we are collaborating on this idea, building knowledge together. That's particularly important in health care because of the rate at which information changes, the amount of specialization that's present in the field nowadays, especially with how easily even patients can access information – that providers need to be aware of, and be aware of understanding how it can deliver care, and being good stewards of their skill sets and their strengths. But most importantly, and why I stress some of the variety of the professionals we support, is health care is a team sport, and I think about what has happened in our hospitals and, especially in the house – in my own house – we've seen that how nurses, PAs, surgeons, primary care, anesthesiologists – I mean, the whole team comes together to really deliver on the promise of health care. And, for that, knowledge is a big connector inside of the big connector, and that's where really reflective learning hinges on this idea of co-learning to foster that thought – that team making process – to really trigger, how I am going to do something better for myself; how might I apply that forward, whether it's for myself or for my team? How might I connect these dots so that all of us together can deliver better care at the same time get credit for individually. And that's really that full circle of seeing, hey, cool, learning is the foundational element of something that makes you spark, consider, reflect – it's the spark of that experience.

ANHI: Thank you, Niraj. That's very helpful. Are there any closing comments you'd like to share with our listeners – or any other key takeaways?

Niraj: Oh, I'd love to. We've been doing this for a while. We've seen a lot of activity and reflections, and meaningful paragraphs of insight that people are reflecting on how and what they learned applies to their practice. When you look at all that data, you see all the insights around how they're transmitting a concept of practice. You really start realizing the joy of reflective learning is in this natural pattern of taking a note, and – and making something meaningful for yourself as an individual, and that really is a pathway to continuing education, as opposed to a guarantee of a credit, right? Like, you really are on this pathway of learning – on this path of discovering your better self, and doing so, clinicians are lifelong learners. They don't need a nudge to become more lifelong learners. They just need a system that supports that and almost acts as a backbone for that and kind of an assistant for that – that's really what we've seen as being the real hook, credit is just a meaningful reward when they, on their own self-directed, unbiased way, find that meaning and are able to draw a connection to their work. But really, the joys, and the learning, and that pathway to education and continuous improvement – and that's really – something we're really excited to see when we look at podcasts and innovators take a position to really spark learning, as opposed to guaranteed credit, to spark these pathways to making sense of what innovation might become practice. How might new ideas and new concepts become care delivery? How do different personas apply that? Well, how does a nurse versus an MD versus a dietitian apply these concepts at work? That really is setting up the foundation of context, and really, the spark for these individuals to make more from all the innovations they're going to get exposed

to. So, I'm really excited and really, really happy to be on this podcast and talk about, and learn about, the work you all are doing, as well as how to create our health care community can learn together, reflect, and actually make it about health care.

ANHI: Oh, I love that, Niraj. It's been such a pleasure speaking with you. Thank you so much for your insights, and for joining us today on today's Power of Nutrition podcast.

Niraj: Thank you so much for having me on this podcast. You guys are doing some amazing work. And honestly, if there's anybody that's listening to this podcast, and thinks about how the learning might change for them and how they might select, and – and become better, and honestly, you're setting the foundation for that. So, thank you so much for having me here. We look forward to seeing all the reflective learning you spark.

ANHI: For our listeners, if you're looking for education where reflective learning credit is available, please visit [ANHI.org/education](https://anhi.org/education). We will be adding new reflective learning offerings often throughout this year. Thanks for listening. Stay healthy and safe.