

Supplementary Digital Appendix 1



Clinical Department Chairs Survey about Elephants

Elephants: *Elephants* in academic medicine refer to important problems within departments, the medical school, or the teaching hospitals that need to be confronted, but, for various reasons are ignored, often for long periods of time.

1. What do you consider to be the major issues (*elephants*) in your organization? Please rank from 1-5, with 1 being most common)

- _____ Ignoring information that clearly indicates a performance problem
- _____ Misalignment between goals and available resources
- _____ Failure to deal with disruptive behaviors
- _____ Unwillingness to speak up about inequities (e.g., pay, space, favoritism, special deals)
- _____ Unwillingness to give up on a failing strategy

If there are other common *elephants* that we missed, please add here. _____

2. To what extent do *elephants* exist in your organization? (*Please check 1*)

- Minimally Considerably They are wide spread

3. Compared to other academic medical centers, *elephants* in my institution are:

- Less Common About the Same More Common

4. What are the major reasons people decline to speak up about *elephants*? (Rank 1-5, with 1 being most common)

- _____ A personal fear of repercussions
- _____ Belief that speaking up will be ignored
- _____ Belief that someone else should speak up
- _____ Reluctance to deal with an issue once exposed
- _____ Poor relationship with the individual(s) who need to hear about the elephants

If there is another reason we missed please add here. _____

5. What are the consequences of not speaking up about *elephants*? (Rank 1-5, with 1 being most common)

- _____ Poor decision making from inadequate information sharing
- _____ Negative impact on faculty/staff morale
- _____ Problems with faculty/staff retention
- _____ Not speaking up becomes a cultural norm
- _____ Organization doesn't learn from it's mistakes

If there is another consequence we missed please add here. _____

6. There are some *elephants* in my organization that are best left alone.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree/Agree Equally Agree Strongly Agree

7. Please check the statement that best describes the status of *elephants* in your institution?
Elephants are:

- _____ usually discussed in an appropriate venue
- _____ discussed, but only in informal settings like the water cooler or the restroom
- _____ rarely discussed

8. Ignoring *elephants* in my medical center is more common in:

- My department
- In other departments
- Among the deans
- Among the hospital leadership

9. In your organization, how difficult would it be to create a culture in which *elephants* are openly discussed?

- Very Difficult
- Moderately Difficult
- Moderately Easy
- Very Easy

10. Top leaders in my organization:

- Encourage people to call out the *elephants* and deal with them
- Say they want people to call out the *elephants* but their actions or non-verbal cues indicate otherwise
- Pretend the *elephants* don't exist
- Don't know that *elephants* exist

11. The best way to encourage people to call out the *elephants* is to:

- Have top leaders set the example by acknowledging *elephants* and encouraging people to speak up
 - Reward people for acknowledging *elephants*
 - Setting aside dedicated time at meetings to discuss *elephants*
 - Have an anonymous suggestion box labeled *elephants*
- Are there other ways to encourage people to call out the *elephants*? _____
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12. How long have you been a department chair (in years)? _____