Roles and Responsibilities of the PBL Tutor

General Expectations:

Tutors will be supportive of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) concepts and the self-directed learning approach and recognize the tutorials as a forum for students to integrate information and obtain guidance and feedback.

The tutor is the facilitator of the tutorial process and not necessarily a content "expert". The tutor guides the group, supports participation of all members, and monitors the depth and the breadth of the content discussed.

Tutorials are completed 100% virtually using the Zoom platform. Tutors must have a comfort level with technology and interacting in a virtual small group context.

Primary Roles:

- Facilitate a learning climate that is open and safe. Students should be comfortable enough to identify difficulties openly, challenge one another, and admit when knowledge is lacking.
- Encourage critical thinking and ensure that students' knowledge is challenged and probed.
- Consistently provide objective, behaviour-based feedback to each member of the group.
- Provide objective, behaviour-based feedback about the group process, to optimize the group's functioning.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Attend the initial training session and weekly tutors' meetings.
- Attend all tutorials. If you need to miss a tutorial, you must inform the Course Coordinator as soon as possible so a replacement can be arranged. Stipends are pro-rated to account for any absences.
- Be familiar with the unit's themes as well as the learning objectives of each health care problem (HCP). Each HCP has a Tutor Guide that defines the required learning objectives and provides additional context for the HCP.
- Be familiar with the requirements for evaluation of student performance.
- Consult with course coordinator regarding student tutorial performance issues **as early as possible**, especially in the event of a student at risk of Not Meeting Expectations in one or more areas of evaluation.
- Consult and share strategies with the coordinator and other tutors related to the tutorial process in a proactive manner.
- Complete tutorial midterm and final evaluations by the required deadlines
- Inform the course coordinator when students miss more than one tutorial.
- Share their goals with the course coordinator, participate in a peer observation, and integrate feedback from students and the coordinator.

Tutors are expected to:

Facilitate the group process

- Ask open-ended questions to challenge students and stimulate healthy discussions.
- Elicit alternative perspectives, opposing views, discussion of consequences, conclusions.
- Welcome diverse perspectives and model inclusive behaviours.
- Indicate when the breadth or depth has or has not been achieved.
- Encourage students to check for accuracy of information brought by group members.
- Facilitate skill development for each group member and support each member's personal learning goals.

Promote group problem-solving skills and critical thinking

- Ask students to examine facts and phenomena from the cellular level to level of the individual, family, community, and society.
- Encourage students to be critical of hypotheses and evidence.
- Model critical reasoning behaviour.
- Encourage students to clearly define issues and learning objectives and synthesize information.

Promote efficient group functioning

- Assist the group with setting rules and structuring tutorials.
- Encourage students to identify learning goals.
- Encourage students to monitor group process and take various roles, as needed.
- Model productive ways to provide feedback.
- Assist the group in identifying challenges to tutorial processes and functions and help students with finding solutions.

Evaluate group and group members' performance

- Encourage students to set personal objectives.
- Encourage and model self-evaluation.
- Provide honest, timely, and clear feedback to group members at the end of each tutorial.
- Submit midterm and final evaluations to the course coordinator by the specified deadline and complete any requested edits prior to the feedback sessions.

Student Accommodations:

Students who disclose physical or mental health problems to the tutor should be directed to speak with the course coordinator, or Student Accessibility Services (SAS) https://sas.mcmaster.ca/.

Resources:

A tutor manual and complete set of training resources is provided on the Avenue to Learn platform for all tutors.