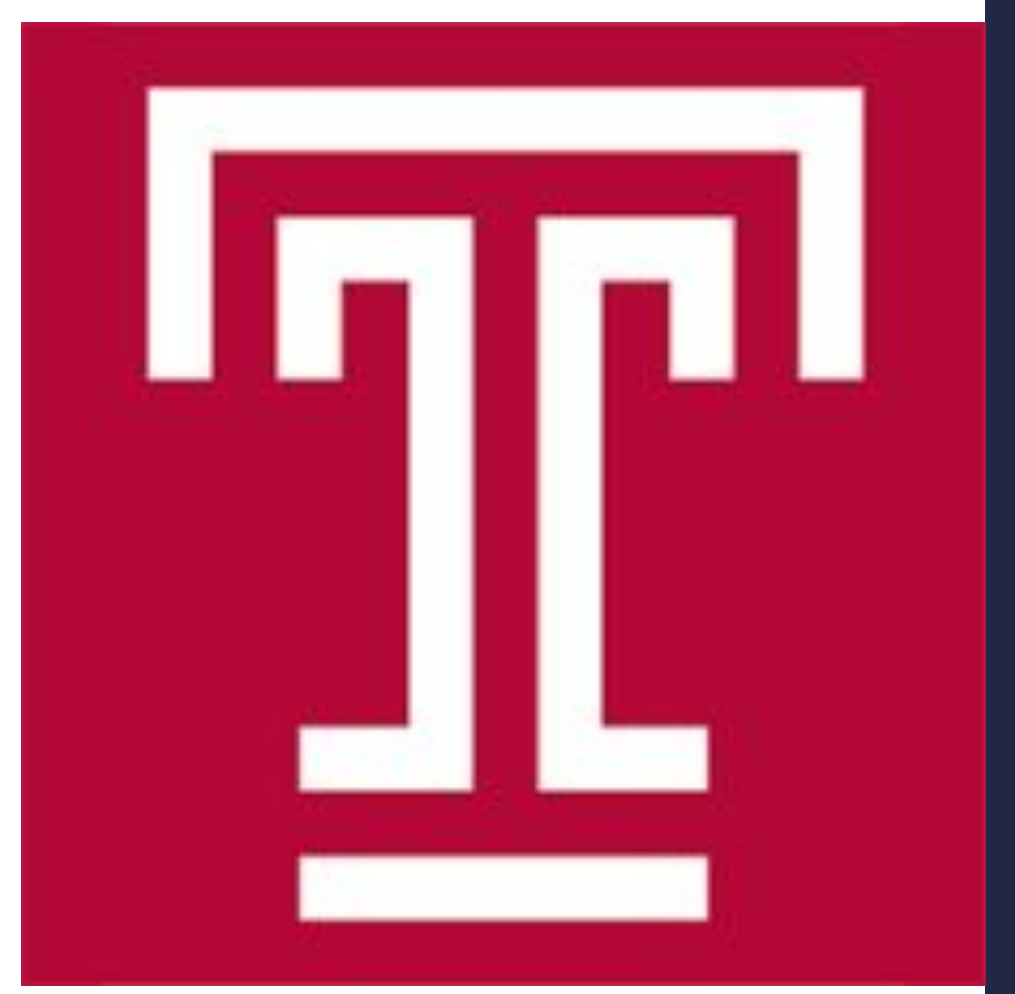




Sooner The Better: Methods of Improving Soft Skills For The Radiologist and Staff in the Workplace



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Background

Hard skills are acquired by the radiologist in their medical training and include diagnostic and procedural abilities. The concept of soft skills is less tangible, often involving one's personality, and includes characteristics such as communication, leadership, empathy, humility, and managing stress. We discuss the importance of soft skills as it applies to the radiology workplace.

Objectives

- Identify soft skills pertinent to the radiologist and their relevance to the workplace
- Describe methods to enhance one's soft skills
- Discuss ways residency programs can facilitate the development of soft skills of residents

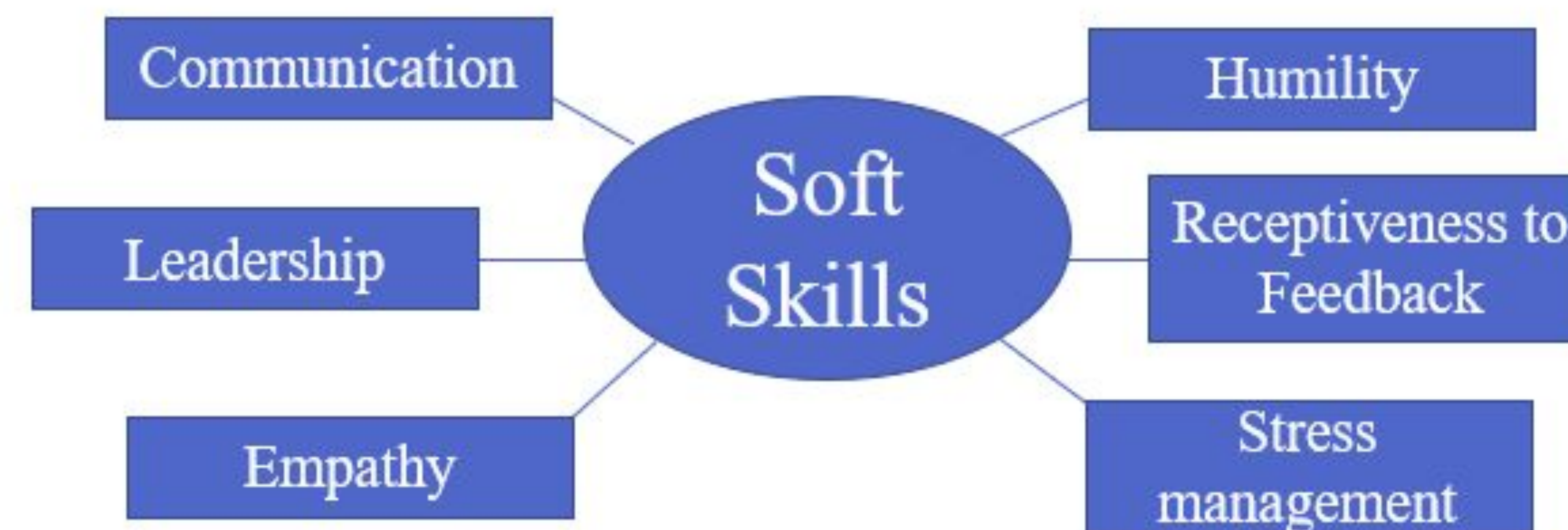
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Discussion

The following are important soft skills and ways the radiologist can improve them:

- **Communication:** Communication is arguably the most important soft skill for a radiologist to hone. One can participate in simulated conversations with colleagues discussing difficult topics such as conveying bad results, unexpected findings, and interacting with an upset consulting clinician.
- **Leadership:** Radiologists make many important clinical decisions and having strong leadership skills is essential. Leadership building should be integrated early in training through opportunities for residents to lead case presentations and take independent call.
- **Empathy:** Displaying empathy toward patients and families. Practice active listening and ask open-ended questions to better understand the patient's perspective
- **Humility:** Consulting with colleagues to help with difficult clinical questions can improve decision making. It also demonstrates strong work ethic, curiosity, and carefulness and can improve interprofessional relationships.
- **Receptiveness to Feedback:** Being open to feedback is a critical skill for the radiologist. Residency programs should include scheduled meetings and evaluations in addition to providing real-time feedback in the reading room.
- **Stress management:** The radiology workplace can become hectic with a building list and competing priorities. One can mitigate stress levels through scheduled breaks integrated throughout the day and finding opportunities to temporarily step away from work for a breather.



Conclusion

Soft skills are essential for radiologists to perform their duties effectively. Honing these skills will improve patient care, one's professional success, and facilitate a healthy and collaborative work environment.