A Needs Assessment for online training in disclosure and apology conversations
Megan Lamberto1, Elaine Meyer1, Donna Luff1
1Institute for Professionalism and Ethical Practice, Boston Children's Hospital

Introduction/Objectives
Disclosure and apology conversations after medical errors and adverse events are vital to safer, high quality healthcare. But these conversations are difficult for the patients, families and clinicians involved. In 2014, the Institute for Professionalism & Ethical Practice (IPEP) and OPENPediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital launched a collaborative project, Advancing Relational Learning Worldwide to Improve Patient Safety and Quality, with the aim of developing online curricula to enhance communication and relational skills in healthcare worldwide. The first online course focuses on disclosure and apology conversations after medical errors and adverse events. To meet the needs of potential users, the project team undertook Needs Assessment research for this course. An innovative feature of the proposed course is a moderated interactive online workshop, in which participants work with faculty in a chat room format to discuss an enacted case scenario. The Needs Assessment thus sought information on users’ preferences in relation to content topic areas and duration of interactive participation online.

Methods
IRB approval was obtained to distribute a 13-item survey, covering interest in disclosure and apology topic areas, format of online materials and willingness to participate in moderated online workshops of varying duration. The survey was distributed via Survey Monkey to OPENPediatrics users, through a link in their Newsletter, and by email outreach to IPEP’s database of previous attenders at their training workshops. The survey was administered twice between October 2014 and January 2015. The potential pool of respondents was high (in the 1000’s), but there was no reliable way to calculate an exact denominator of survey respondents. This issue is common to mass online surveys.

Results
The total number of respondents was 102, with a range of professions including physicians and physicians in training, nurses, psychosocial professionals, medical interpreters and chaplains. The largest group of respondents were physicians (n= 42, 41%), followed by nurses (n=30, 29%). 16 respondents (16%) specified “other” professional categories. 82 respondents (80%) were from the US. The remaining 20% came from a total of 14 different countries. Key findings included good support for interactive workshops online. 64.7% reported that they would be willing to spend between 1-3 hours in an interactive online workshop format (44.1% said they would attend a 1-2 hour workshop, 20.6% said 2-3 hours). In terms of topics desired, most respondents were interested in patient and family experiences (88.2%), practical aspects of conducting the conversation (86.3%), clinicians’ experiences (83%), and error case scenarios (78.4%). Legal issues were of interest to 68.6% of respondents.

Discussion/Implications
The Needs Assessment Survey showed high levels of support for interactive engagement online of between 1-3 hours duration. This result was somewhat surprising given other work suggesting short intervals of online attention in self-guided learning. This study was limited by a small and self-selected sample, with a difficult to calculate denominator. Nonetheless, the findings offer encouragement to others interested in developing new modes of interactive communication and relational training, including workshops of multiple hour duration, online.