



ART IN DERMATOLOGY

# IMPROVISATION IN MEDICINE: THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOMING A WELL-ROUNDED CLINICIAN

B Ho<sup>(1)</sup>

*St George's Hospital, Dermatology, London, United Kingdom<sup>(1)</sup>*

Comedic improvisation has been introduced as psychotherapy (1) for mental health issues, leadership workshops to help building confidence and developing public speaking skills. We believe comedic improvisation can a novel method in helping clinicians develop a mindful practice, enhance the ability to multitask (2), and develop better communication skills.

Improv, also known as improv comedy or improvisational theatre, refers to any theatrical performance without a script. As the art of improvised comedy stems from Italy in the 1400s to America in the late 1930s, the discipline and training of modern-day improv comedy stems from two formal major institutes: The Second City (founded by Bernard Sahlins, Howard Alk, & Paul Sills) and ImprovOlympic (founded by Del Close & Charna Halpern). The premise of Improv comedy builds on the idea of “yes, and...” where one individual will agree and build on any suggestions from any other individuals. The idea of “yes, and...” is intended to strengthen the skills and relationships among team members.

The other major concept within improv comedy is embracing failure and not being “burdened by the fear of failure” (3). We are often internally driven and competitive individuals raised with the idea that success is the only appropriate goal in life.

Improv has the ability to create personal opportunities for growth and exploration and also bridge gaps in our conventional medical training.

## References:

1. Sheesley AP, Pfeffer M, Barish B. Comedic Improv Therapy for the Treatment of Social Anxiety Disorder. J Creat Ment Health. 2016;11(2):157–69.
2. Schmitz JJ. Emergency medicine resident multitasking and improvisation. Acad Emerg Med Off J Soc Acad Emerg Med. 2012 Feb;19(2):228–9.
3. Leonard K, Yorton T. Yes, and: How improvisation reverses ‘No, But’ thinking and improves creativity and collaboration - Lessons from the second city. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

