

Failure is Not Fatal: Experience from Creating a Support Group on RadDiscord for Radiologists Who Did Not Pass the CORE.



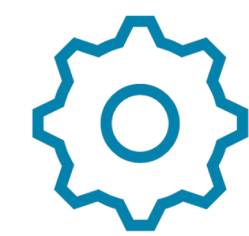
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1. Introduction

- The American Board of Radiology Qualifying (Core) Exam has had a pass rate ranging from 84% in 2019 to 95% in 2023.
- Unfortunately, little support and resources exist outside of individual programs for this group of residents.
- Using RadDiscord, an anonymous support group called "Pissed but Motivated" was created to provide resources and grief support for examinees who did not pass.



2. Methods

- The support group mission is to emphasize that failing an examination does not make a person an overall failure (Figure 1).
- The group mentors regularly checked in on members, assessing where they were at in the grieving process. Depending on the stage (Figure 5), support could range from reassurance to assessing points of improvement to providing mindfulness techniques (Figure 4), test taking strategies and practice questions.



3. Results

- In 2021, our group began with 31 members and 3 mentors. It has grown to 51 members and 5 mentors. The feedback from those who passed has been resoundingly positive (Figure 2).
- The new mentors were members of the group who passed the Core exam and volunteered to pay it forward. This fostered a culture which encouraged group members to feel safe sharing their struggles, buttressed the healing process, and accentuated the happiness after succeeding (Figures 2 and 3).



4. Discussion

- To our knowledge, this is the first multi-institutional support group aimed at helping members who failed the Core exam.
- Our experience has become overwhelmingly positive (Figure 1, 2 and 3). The group members have become more supportive, resilient and compassionate (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The mentors have become better educators. We all agree that failure should not be dealt with alone.

Failing the Core made me doubt myself in so many ways. Made me doubt myself as a radiologist and a doctor. It was difficult to regroup and study again. It was difficult to face everyone at work again.	There with you. It was the first standardized exam I failed as well.
It makes me so sad that I never stressed this much before an exam...like I never thought about failing when I took step 1, 2 and 3.	Failing this exam sucks and I wouldn't wish it on anyone. But on the other side of that - it has helped me be more understanding and compassionate. As well as take more time to study things most people gloss over once or twice.
Congratulations to those who passed! And for those who did not... you will persevere. I failed twice. I'm not alone in that camp. Some have failed multiple times. ... Feel free to message me if you are feeling down and out! We are all here for you!!!	How do you respond to someone who doesn't understand why you failed?
Thank you for sharing. It feels better to know that I'm not the only one.	

Figure 1. Failure is part of everyone's journey, but many people in medicine keep their experiences quiet. We're here to change that. Failing an exam does not make you a failure. The courage to keep trying is important, and seeking help is a sign of strength.

Far too often, we focus on the goal we want as the be-all-end-all. However, I believe that we find the most joy in the journey: the lessons we learn along the way, overcoming the darkness, and appreciating the small things. Using these things to attain our goals makes you cherish your victories more.	
Passed. This group was so encouraging. Thank you.	I would like to thank you all for the support. I finally get to move on from this horrible exam.
Hi all! I just wanted to thank you for creating this group and keeping it going ... I'm here if any people currently studying for a retake need someone to vent to or just need an accountability buddy. We've got this!	Finally passed. I won't be pissed anymore, only motivated.
Today has been a whole host of emotions. Enthusiasm... Annoyance... Anger.. Frustration... Anticipation that this might be the last time... Happiness that I can spend the whole night with my kids and not feel guilty about not studying. Fear that I might have to put my family through this again. I'm sure others have been there and can relate. Thanks for letting me vent!	

Figure 2. Imagine your lives once you've passed. What's on the other side? Let that light, however dim it may seem, guide you forward. On the other side of passing, that light is brighter than imagined and can be used to help guide others.



Figure 3. Original haiku by a member of the Core support group. Digital art created with Chat GPT 4.

I am a good Radiologist	I will PASS the exam
This test does NOT define my worth	This test does NOT reflect what I do to truly help people
I have helped heal thousands of patients and will help many more after the test	

Figure 4. A member's "Mindfulness Mirror" with positive affirmations reviewed daily.

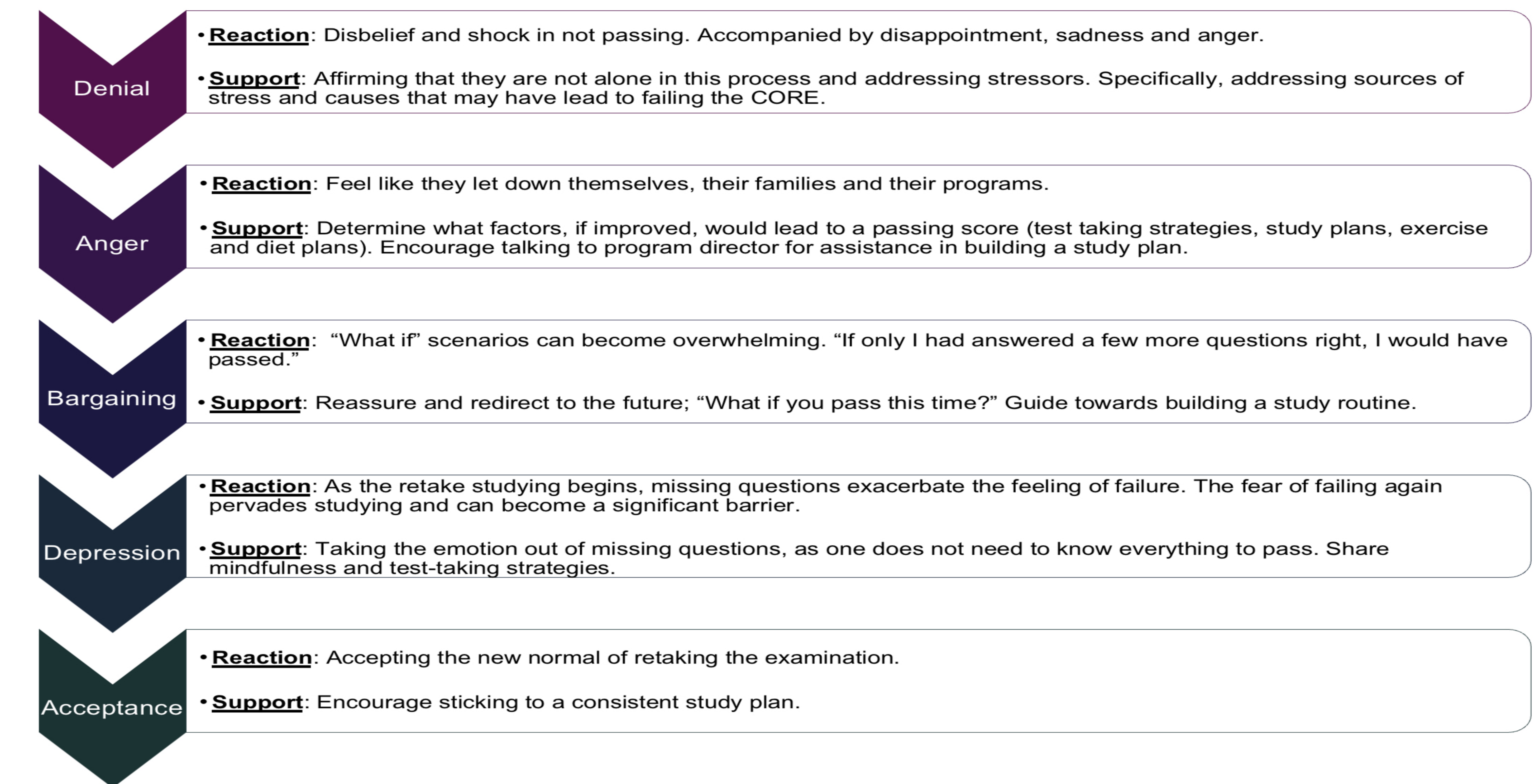


Figure 5. The 5 Stages of Grief from the perspective from failing the Core exam. The reaction denotes how examinees in our group were observed to respond at each stage. The support our group mentors provided was tailored to where the examinee was in their grief process to make the most impact. Anecdotally, in our experience, examinees were not ready to fully commit to studying for the repeat examination until they had accepted their situation and the new challenges ahead.

References

- Kubler-Ross, E. *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* 1st Ed. Scribner; 2005.
- Vessel D, Lexa FJ and Zafar HM. Failing and failing up. *J Am Coll Radiol* 2021;18(3):465-466.
- Zhu Grace G et al. RadDiscord's Big Bang: Perspectives and Impact of Creation of a Successful Radiology Education Community. *Academic Radiology* 2023; 31(2): 390-398.