Lessons Learned - My First Year in Practice
Michael Beebe 10/12/2017

- You are never going to be as hard on yourself as you are right now
  - “We are ‘training’ cosmetic surgeons of the skeleton; skeletal cosmetologists.” –Sarmiento
    - Just because you can fix something doesn’t mean you should
    - A non-infected arthritic joint is, in most cases, going to be better than an infected nonunion
    - When you get a referral, refrain from being judgmental. You don’t know what happened during the original injury/surgery.
  - Patients that may be better off letting their fracture heal and doing a reconstructive/replacement surgery in the future
    - Find some people that you can work with for these injuries. Having colleagues that you can trust to help you with these patients will make your life easier and improve your patient care.
- You are going to have complications
  - In the end, you will help many more than you will hurt, but you are going to have people that end up having complications, sometimes even being worse off, as a result of surgery you perform.
  - Honesty is the best policy. Talk to your patients and don’t try to hide things.
  - Make sure that you take the time to tell your patients about the risks of surgery. Don’t sugar coat it and make it seem like everything will be alright when you know it won’t.
    - It is much easier to talk to a patient about the complications before they happen
- You are going to see injuries that you have never seen
  - There is no way to, by the end of fellowship, see each and every injury you will ever see.
  - By the end of fellowship, you should have a core set of skills and principals that you can apply to fractures and injuries that you have never seen.
    - Apply these principals, think outside the box, talk to colleagues.
- Billing
  - Get a copy of AAOS Code-x and use it to help with billing. It will help you figure out what codes can be applied together and which will need modifiers.
    - Do your own coding
  - Talk to your billers regularly and find out if they are changing your codes or if codes are being rejected, resulting in longer time to reimbursement
- Family/Mental Health
  - “This is a marathon, not a sprint.”
  - Take time away from work.
  - Go on vacation, you can afford it now.
  - Enjoy time with your family and when your kids have a ball game or a dance recital, make time to attend.
  - If you are feeling stressed, talk to someone. Most of your senior colleagues will have been in similar situations at one point or another.