

# Dear Breast Imaging Professionals:

what if



Are you ready? October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and we all know what that means...schedules will be packed, yet somehow we'll find room for "add-ons". We'll work extra hours, and often wonder if it's time for lunch (at 9 am). Thanks to Coronavirus, this year has been challenging on so many levels. We've had to learn to overcome furloughs, layoffs, reduced staffing and reduced hours. An increase in the use of PPE has led to it's own set of challenges. So this October, let's try something new. What if we used this month to ask ourselves "what if...."

*What if* we appreciated each other, our patients and found gratitude in our opportunity to work in Breast Imaging? What if we left work thinking..

*"Today I made a difference for someone."*

*What if* we remembered that as breast imagers, our patients are grateful for what we do, even if they don't acknowledge it. We thrive on praise and connection, so when our patients arrive with a reserved demeanor and want to get in and out as quickly as possible, it can be discouraging and has the potential to foster negative interactions. This negative thought process can be exacerbated when patients say things to technologists like "This machine was definitely invented by a man", or "Is *this* what you do *all* day long?". Our patients have a perspective of breast imaging that is completely different than our own and their perspective is usually filled with anxiety. Their experience...can start with YOU. How *you* respond to their concerns and questions affects their experience. It's up to *you* to provide appropriate education and conversation to ensure they leave feeling well cared for and respected.

*What if* your radiologists acknowledged the challenges involved in acquiring a high-quality exam? What if they could see that your patient had scoliosis, a frozen shoulder, had multiple biopsies on her breast and was tender to the touch, so getting her in the machine and applying adequate compression was a miracle? What if your radiologists could see the fear in the eyes of your patient as you explained the upcoming procedure to them? What if they could feel their apprehension and anxiety? The collaboration between technologists, radiologists, and patients... this can also start with YOU.

*What if* your co-workers knew how much you appreciated them? What if you told them that you love coming to work when you know they'll be there? What if they knew how grateful you were when they answered the phone for a quick consult? What if this month, in addition to wondering "*what if*", we told our co-workers "*Thank you*"? Saying "thank you" to your co-workers, your radiologists and especially to your patients can be extremely rewarding. Saying "thank you" and giving positive affirmations also contributes to gratitude and engagement.

To our radiologist colleagues: we hope you understand how much your leadership matters. *You* have an opportunity to lead and set the tone for the entire imaging department. You have the ability to encourage learning by keeping the lines of communication open. Your technologists need to hear that you value their effort and the work they do. They need to feel your gratitude for the quality exams that they'll work tirelessly this month to accomplish. We all know that positivity is contagious, but keep in mind, gratitude is contagious as well.

*What if* we ALL maintained a positive atmosphere, especially now and especially this month when our schedules are overloaded? What if together we celebrated our progress and encouraged each other's ideas? What if each of us respected the differences and uniqueness that we bring to our team? We ALL share the responsibility of being kind, compassionate caregivers. It takes a special person to work in breast imaging. YOU are that person and your patients need YOU. This October, I hope you continue to challenge yourself by asking ...

*"What if"*

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