

DATA Integrity & Compliance BLOG

What it means to be a medical coder.....by Laura Lovett CPC, CPMA, CEMC

You have to stop and think when someone asks you a question like “how old are you?” but can rattle off the codes for things like DM, HTN, COPD, GERD, etc. without batting an eye.

You find humor in the strangest things “*this gentleman presents today after having accidentally introduced a foreign body into his left knee*”. (FYI, he shot himself with a nail gun)

You hate the end of the month.

You can learn to read nearly every variety of doctor font out there...eventually.

You have been yelled out and thrown under the bus and when it is determined you were right all along, there is no recompense in the form of an apology or formal acknowledgement. You just get to silently bank your victory in your own personal vault of happiness.

Your desk/books/monitor is covered in sticky notes with cryptic messages that only make sense to you.

You learn something new every day. Whether you want to or not.

The only people you can successfully vent to are other coders, since no one else understands what you are even talking about.

You are very aware that even if you are an “Autumn” orange is not your color.

You are no stranger to working in basements and cubicle farms. The odds of having a window are usually slim to none.

You have a sweater at your desk year round and it is not uncommon to see you wearing it even when the temperature outside is in the 90's.

You can spell all kinds of crazy medical terms which no spell check has ever heard of with no problem but still have to use little mental tricks (tom-or-row) when spelling non-medical terms.

You are a gatekeeper. You are there to protect the interests of multiple parties. You need to ensure the providers are given appropriate credit for the work they have done. You need to ensure the insurers and patients are only charged for services rendered.

You are important. You are valued. You may not hear it or feel it but it is true. You are not alone. Choose to be happy and don't forget to laugh. Life is a journey, not a destination. Remember to have fun!