



MCG MEDICAL EDUCATOR MINUTE

#17

Orienting Learners to Your Practice

BACKGROUND Spending time with your learner on day 1 to share expectations of the learning experience and orienting them to your office can save hours of frustration and inefficiencies for your time together. Consider creating a document to help organize your thoughts to make it easier to orient future learners.

SUGGESTIONS

- Practical: Walk around, introduce to staff, point out bathroom, working area, where to eat lunch.
- Discuss expectations you have of the learner and ask what they expect from the rotation with you. Be clear about expectations and consequences when they are not met. Clarify dress code and expected work hours.
- Review knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes and behaviors you hope student will learn during your time together. Develop 3 objectives for the day/week/month. (SMART Goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
- Explain when and how feedback will be given. Feedback should be immediate if negative behaviors need to be corrected, but there should also be scheduled feedback periodically during rotation
- Learner's background: What experiences has your learner been exposed to so far? What are his interests both in medicine and outside of medicine? If learner is planning on going to a field that is different than yours, consider how you can make each patient more applicable to their career plans. Share your own professional background and career choices you have had to make.
- Possibly 1st day consider letting the learner follow you around to see how you work. Once student oriented and your learner is ready to see patients, try wave schedule in outpatient setting:

Teacher schedule*		Learner schedule	
9:00	See patient X	9:00	Review patient A record
9:15	See patient Y	9:15	See patient A
9:30	See patient A with student	9:30	Present Patient A to teacher
9:45	See patient Z	9:45	Chart patient A
10:00	Repeat cycle	10:00	Repeat cycle with patient B

*Australian Family physician Vol 35 No1/2, 2005

- Learning to do focused visits rather than complete H and Ps is an important objective. You can orient the student to concentrate on 1 or 2 problems of a complex patient. Give them a couple of questions they must ask and then give them a time limit. Consider having learner present patient in the room so patient has a chance to clarify if any of the information was misunderstood.
- Students are especially helpful for short research projects i.e. side effects of medicines or looking up a helpful patient handout for anticipatory guidance.
- Make sure to orient your patients to having a learner involved using positive language but always defer to the patient's final judgement.
- The entire history can be used from the student as long as it is confirmed by the supervising physician

WANT MORE?

[Selecting Patients and Preparing Learners](#)

REFERENCES

Weise, J. Teaching in the Hospital (ACP Teaching Medicine Series) 1st Ed., Chapter 3.