

Setting Expectations –

III. Rotation Objectives

Introduction

For the community preceptor, teaching is not a full-time job. When there are long periods of time between precepted rotations, it can take a few days to get back into the routine of teaching. Yet those first days of a rotation are critical for helping a learner adapt to a new practice environment and a new preceptor.

Developing a system for orienting and clarifying expectations with a learner can help each rotation get off to a good start. While the first day of a rotation (usually Monday) is almost always hectic, taking the time to orient the learner on that first day saves the preceptor time and energy the rest of the rotation by preventing learner mistakes and unintended transgressions of office norms. A systematic orientation also helps a preceptor tailor the rotation to different learners' particular needs. And it provides a framework for giving learners feedback and evaluating them.

This series of documents will briefly explore the four steps of setting expectations:

- 1) Orienting learners to the logistics of the practice and rotation,
- 2) Setting expectations of the learner's performance,
- 3) Selecting mutually-agreeable rotation objectives, and**
- 4) Providing feedback about whether they are meeting the set expectations.

Example

It is Tuesday evening and you are catching up on paperwork. On your calendar you see that you have a third-year medical student coming Monday for a four-week rotation, Lisa Jones.

Several months ago, the arrival of your last student coincided with a particularly busy morning at the hospital. You were delayed getting into the office and the student spent an hour reading magazines in the waiting room. You were pleased with his clinical skills, but as you filled out his evaluation form at the end of the rotation, you realized you had not observed him in some of the categories listed on the form. When you asked for his feedback about the rotation, you were surprised to hear he had wanted learn more about managing chronic back pain; this request would have been easy to meet had you known his interest.

Rotation Objectives

Once you have discussed your various expectations with the learner, it is time to set specific rotation objectives. You may opt to wait one or two days to get a better sense of the learner's

skills and so that the learner thinks more about his or her own objectives. It is important that time be set aside to determine the rotation objectives with the learner, just as you took time to clarify expectations together.

The rotation objectives should be

- Limited in number (more than 5-7 will be hard to accomplish),
- Reflective the expectations of the school, learner and you, and should be mutually agreeable to you and the learner.
 - can include clinical knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the learner is expected to develop
 - should include specific strategies for meeting each objective.
- Written – writing objectives down can help you and the learner keep track of them.

Examples:

Improve efficiency in collecting history and physical findings

Think of and present the common diagnoses presenting common symptoms, and common diagnoses presenting uncommon symptoms

Practice giving shots, suturing, and drawing blood (at least 3 instances per week each)

Discuss with the office manager talking about practice finances and insurance billing

References

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