

# Effective Clinical Teaching in the Outpatient Setting

## Construct a Teaching Environment

- Is it possible to adjust or restructure execution of your schedule to facilitate teaching and learning?
- Does your clinical staff know the role of the learner within the care team and how to respond?
- Have you arranged to share teaching responsibilities with other members of the team (see below)?
- Is there some form of learner orientation (perhaps a handout, or time with a manager) to provide information on where things are located, who to ask for what, policies, routines, etc.?
- How are patients informed that a learner will be involved in their care? Exam room signs? Handout?

## Communicate Expectations and Thinking Processes

- Be explicit about what you expect from the learner with regard to activities and responsibilities, how long each should take, the daily schedule, their role in learning, communication, etc.
- Assign specific work to complete before clinical encounters or procedures (looking up something, etc.).
- Explicitly communicate your thinking and clinical reasoning as a means of teaching and role modeling.

## Cover Specific Content

- What are the school's learning objectives (goals) for this clinical learning experience?
- Are there particular types of cases or procedures the learner is expected to experience this rotation?
- The learner does not need to see every patient or be involved in every step of the appointment.

## Collaborate with the Learner

- What are the learner's self-perceived strengths and weaknesses, and concerns? What are the learner's goals for this experience? To what extent have prior rotations prepared the learner for this one?
- When the learner is to observe your work, prepare the learner by pointing out things to look for, or questions the learner should be prepared to answer after the encounter.

## Provide Feedback

- Plan specific times to provide feedback, and be sure to label as such ("I'm providing you feedback").
- Repeatedly observe the learner interacting with patients and provide feedback accordingly.

## Broaden Learning Opportunities - The learner could:

- Spend time with other members of the care team (e.g., learning how to register, room, and check out patients, case management, business aspects of the practice).
- Create or update patient educational materials, or be involved in quality improvement projects.
- Counsel patients on healthy behaviors, or research and then share community resources with patients.
- Research answers to questions you pose (do follow up to reinforce completion and relevant learning).
- Review patient results with you, then call patients to provide information and follow-up instructions.
- Complete reflections on patients seen (personal reactions, surprises, questions that arose, etc.).

**Do you have questions, comments, or suggestions? Email Michael Wiederman, Ph.D., at [mwiederman@uabmc.edu](mailto:mwiederman@uabmc.edu).**