

How to Deal with the Difficult Student....

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Learning Objectives...

At the conclusion of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Define the categories that describe a difficult medical student
- Describe the SOAP approach to dealing with the difficult student
- Explain the benefits from having a systematic approach to the difficult medical student

How Do You Define the Difficult Medical Student???

Student Doctor Jones

- A 4th year student who just began a month-long rotation in Family Medicine with you
 - Your practice is office-based
 - This is day 4 of the rotation and you have noted:
 - <A> His presentation skills are below average
 - His differential diagnosis ability is quite poor

Student Doctor Jones

- How are you going to approach student doctor Jones about these issues??
 - What types of things will you discuss??
 - How will you follow-up on this??
 - What are effective actions you can take to help resolve these issues?

Student Doctor Smith

- A 3rd year student who just began a month-long rotation in Internal Medicine with you
 - Your practice is office and hospital-based
 - This is his third rotation
 - This is day 3 of the rotation and you have noted:
 - <A> He has been late twice to the hospital rounds
 - He appears unkempt with wrinkled clothes and a dirty lab coat

Student Doctor Smith

- How are you going to approach student doctor Smith about these issues??
 - What types of things will you discuss??
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How Do You Define the Difficult Medical Student???

- <1> Knowledge
- <2> Skills
- <3> Attitudes

How do you Approach the difficult student??

Table 1

PREVENTION

PRIMARY: Prevent the problem before it occurs.

- Know the course expectations.
- Orient the learner well.
- Set clear expectations and goals.
- Determine the learner's goals and expectations.
- Reassess mid-course.

SECONDARY: Early Detection

- Pay attention to your hunches/dues.
- Don't wait.
- Initiate SOAP early.
- Give specific feedback early and monitor closely.

TERTIARY: Manage a problem to minimize impact.

- If it ain't workin'... SEEK HELP.
- Don't be a martyr.
- Do not give a passing grade to a learner who has not earned it.

Table 2: SOAP-An Approach to Problem Interactions

Subjective

What do you/others think and say?

Objective

What are the specific behaviors that are observed?

Assessment

Your Differential Diagnosis of the Problem.

Plan

Gather more data? Intervene? Get help?

Table 3. Assessment- Differential Diagnosis

- Cognitive Knowledge base/ Clinical skills less than expected?
- Dyslexia?
- Spatial Perception Difficulties?
- Communication difficulties?
- Lack of effort/interest?
- Affective Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Fear
- Valuable Expects a certain level of work
- Expects a certain grade
- Does not value the rotation
- Does not want to be at your site
- Does not value your teaching
- Holds principles that conflict with those of you or your patients
- Environmental Hospital-Care oriented
- Not used to undifferentiated patient
- Not time-sensitive
- Not patient-satisfaction oriented
- Medical Clinical Depression
- Anxiety Disorder/ Panic
- Recovering from Recent Illness
- Hypothyroidism
- Pre-existing illness in poor control
- Psychosis
- Substance Abuse

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Tools for Dealing with the Difficult Student

- <1> Identify the issue(s) early
- <2> Seek input from others (if available)
- <3> Seek input from the student
- <4> Provide timely and effective feedback
- <5> Document and evaluate appropriately

Do They Have the Proper Tools??

- <1> An introduction/orientation
 - <A> Clearly defined expectations
 - Clearly defined role
- <2> Being a Role model
 - <A> Set the example
- <3> Regular feedback/consistency

Any Questions???

The End...