

Teaching Professionalism



Resident as Teacher: Teaching Professionalism

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Objectives

- Provide examples of how professionalism is taught by behaviors (role-modeling)
- Describe 3 questions that can be used daily to identify teachable moments about professionalism

Imagine the following

- **A new intern admits a patient with COPD and pneumonia. The resident asks the intern to obtain an ABG. The intern has seen, but never done, the procedure.**
- **The intern introduces himself to the patient and explains his role, the purpose of the ABG, and then admits that he has seen several, but never done one. The intern asks the patient's permission to do the ABG, explaining the potential adverse events. Although the patient is at first reluctant, he allows the intern to perform the ABG, which is done without incident.**

Professionalism: Where is it?

- Everywhere, all day long!
- It is in everything that you see and do in the hospital—**You are always on stage!**
 - What do students notice about the residents/interns they work with?
 - What do you notice about the students you work with?
- Opportunities to talk about professionalism: rounds, informal meetings, lunch, etc...

Teaching Professionalism

- **Make professionalism part of the usual dialogue on daily rounds**
- **Role modeling**
- **Point it out as it happens**
- **Attention to everyday interactions:**
 - **Between intern/student and the patient or patient's family**
 - **Between intern/student and other health professionals**
 - **Between intern/student and members of the team**

Teaching Professionalism

- Highlight **OBSERVABLE** behaviors
 - Keep feedback *objective* instead of subjective
 - Describe the behavior or act and not your interpretation

Teaching Professionalism

- Reinforce *self-awareness* about professional behaviors
- Positive reinforcement for highly professional behavior
- Awareness that unprofessional behaviors can cause bad patient outcomes

Teaching Professionalism:

Questions to address daily

- What was done that positively affected the patient? Patient's family? Team dynamic?
- What could be done differently to positively affect the relationship between the healthcare team and the patient? The healthcare team and the family?
- What could be done differently to positively affect the team dynamic?

Guiding Questions:

- What behavior did you observe?
- What ethical principle did the behavior violate/risk? Demonstrate?
- What was the (real or potential) consequence of that behavior to the patient? To the individual doing the behavior?
- What message was sent?
- How can you incorporate the lesson from this into your daily practice of medicine? What would you do the same/differently next time?

Vignette 1

- A new intern admits a patient with COPD and pneumonia. The resident asks the intern to obtain an ABG. The intern has seen, but never done, the procedure.
- The intern introduces himself to the patient and explains his role, the purpose of the ABG, and then admits that he has seen several, but never done one. The intern asks the patient's permission to do the ABG, explaining the potential adverse events. Although the patient is at first reluctant, he allows the intern to perform the ABG, which is done without incident.

Guiding Questions- Vignette 1:

- **What behavior did you observe?**
- The intern admitted a lack of skills and asked permission to perform the procedure, giving the patient the right to refuse.
- **What ethical principle did the behavior violate/risk? Demonstrate?**
- Truth telling; Respect and caring; Autonomy
- **What was the consequence of that behavior to the patient? To the individual doing the behavior?**
- There was increased risk for an adverse event since it was the first time that the intern was performing the ABG. The intern risked being denied permission, but demonstrated honesty and respect and was an excellent role model for the student.

Guiding Questions: Vignette 1

- **What (hidden) message was sent?**
- It is more important to be honest even if you risk losing experience in doing a procedure.
- **How can you incorporate the lesson from this into your daily practice of medicine?**
- Think about the potential consequences of your actions and the impact of putting your own interests above those of your patient.
- **What would you do the same/differently next time?**
- Continue to base your actions on doing things that positively affect the patient, family and/or team.

Vignette 2

- A third-year resident on a busy inpatient ward service leaves the hospital an hour before the rest of his team because he has an appointment. The resident leaves without arranging coverage for himself or back-up for his intern during the time he will be out of the hospital.

Guiding Questions: Vignette 2

- **What behavior did you observe?**
- The resident left the team without supervision while they still had patient care responsibilities in the hospital.
- **What ethical principle did the behavior violate/risk? Demonstrate?**
- Respect for colleagues, responsibility for patient care, responsibility to teach
- **What was the consequence of that behavior to the patient? To the individual doing the behavior?**
- Patients were left to be cared for by an inexperienced intern. While other supervisors were probably available, none would be familiar with the patients on the team if an emergency or complex management issue arose. The resident appears irresponsible.

Guiding Questions: Vignette 2

- **What (hidden) message was sent?**
- The resident's appointment was more important than his work and patient care responsibilities. The intern should be able to fend for himself. The continuity of the team is not important. Teaching/supervisory responsibilities are not important. "When you are a resident, you can leave early too."
- **How can you incorporate the lesson from this into your daily practice of medicine?**
- Think about the potential consequences of your actions and the impact of putting your own interests above those of your patient/team.
- **What would you do the same/differently next time?**
- Arrange for coverage and back-up when time conflicts arise. Prepare your team for your absence. Be available by page/phone for questions or emergencies.

Vignette 3

- Your team admits an 80 year old man with mild dementia for symptomatic anemia from an upper GI bleed. This is his third admission in 4 months for the same problem. He has been taking NSAIDs for back pain.
- On work rounds in the morning, your intern summarizes the case for the team: “This is an 85 year old demented frequent flyer who is non adherent with his PPI and has repeatedly caused his own GI bleeds by self-medicating with NSAIDs.”

Guiding Questions: Vignette 3

- **What behavior did you observe?**
- The intern was disrespectful to the patient, using derogatory terms (demented, frequent flyer), and placed blame on the patient for his current condition (“caused his own GI bleeds”).
- **What ethical principle did the behavior violate/risk? Demonstrate?**
- Respect for patients
- **What was the consequence of that behavior to the patient? To the individual doing the behavior?**
- Disrespect for patients will cloud judgment and potentially impact the care that the patient receives. If the patient overheard the comments, it may have offended him and impacted his trust in his caregivers.

Guiding Questions: Vignette 3

- **What (hidden) message was sent?**
- These comments send a message to the other members of the healthcare team (i.e. students, interns) that it is socially acceptable to make disparaging remarks about patients. Not correcting the intern, in front of the team, sends a message that you think this behavior is acceptable.
- **How can you incorporate the lesson from this into your daily practice of medicine?**
- Act as the leader of the team, and correct students and interns when they use derogatory language to describe a patient. Lead by example and never use derogatory language yourself.
- **What would you do the same/differently next time?**
- Interject when remarks like this are made. Use this experience as an opportunity to teach your team about professional behavior. Stress that it is our responsibility to respect patients and to use appropriate language when speaking about them, at all times.

Professionalism Pearls

- Remember: You are always on stage
 - Interns and students learn from what you do...and don't do
 - You are a role model, even if you don't think you are
- Professionalism is everywhere
 - Start talking about it!
- Be aware that your actions always impact interns, students, patients, families, staff members