

Providing Explanations

You role model critical thinking by providing explanations about:

- How you make decisions in the moment.
For example: "Even though it is not the routine day to do a dressing change on central lines, I see that it is leaking and not intact. Let's change it now to further assess the situation."
- What you consider when setting priorities.
For example: "We should check the medical records for new orders prior to making rounds so then we can implement them along with any needed patient teaching."
- What is important to pay attention to or note.
For example: "Before we give any new medication, it's essential to check patient allergies. It is surprising how many medications are ordered for patients that are allergic to them."
- How you analyze and interpret data.
For example: "An elevated temperature can be from infection, but it also can be seen in dehydration. Let's look for additional data to support either of these."

Use opportunities like patient rounding to explain patient progress and what contributed to positive outcomes.

Being Open and Receptive to Questions

- This is a matter of respect, but it also gets you as the preceptor to think reflectively why something is relevant or important.
For example: "Why does this symptom in this patient mean the patient is getting worse but has no significance for another patient's progress?"
- Remember that you have experience caring for these types of patients; your preceptee may be new to nursing or to the specialty.

Sharing Stories

Enhance reflective learning by providing opportunities to:

- Share a point
- Synthesize and link information in a meaningful way
- Reveal humanness and humor
- Show how one learned from a mistake
- Promote honesty and optimism
- Create a positive learning environment
- Teach the culture and values of an organization or unit

Looking for Opportunities to Learn

- Use and highlight resources for learning, such as print resources (books, journals or unit manuals), people (clinical specialists, other colleagues), electronic resources (the intranet, internet) and specific research resources your organization has made available for clinical staff.
- Seek and share evidence.

NOTICE

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- Show significance of knowing general and specialty standards of care and relevance of evidence-based practice.

Watching for Problems and Planning Ahead

- Include population-specific considerations.
For example: "Why is something important to consider because the patient is 5 years old rather than an adult?"
- Include disease or specialty-specific considerations.
For example, ask why you look for a particular sign or symptom and explain that you have learned that it is a common complication after that particular surgery.
- Include system-specific considerations.
For example, ask why you need to get a test booked now rather than waiting until later in the shift, and explain it is because you know the department that does it closes at a certain time.
- Teach about potential problems and actions for prevention.
For example, say, "I always chart my initial assessments after making first rounds because I've found that they are more accurate and complete. If I wait until later in the shift, I feel more rushed and can forget something important."

Acknowledging Others' Ideas and Beliefs

- Check your inferences and logic with the preceptee.
For example: "I was thinking that because she is going for this test this afternoon, we should get this done now. What do you think?"
- Also check ideas for care with the patient and family.
For example, "What has helped your pain most effectively other times?"
- Be alert for and discuss alternatives. Ask, "What else could we do to help alleviate the patient's pain?"

Demonstrating Reflective Practice

- Always review the actions you performed and the rationale behind them.
- Evaluate patient outcomes and patient progress.
- Relate outcomes to care activities.
- Identify how you followed the Standards of Care.

It is important to note that debriefing after a complex or emotionally-charged interaction allows an opportunity to discuss what went well and to explore alternatives that may have led to a more positive outcome.

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