

THREE TECHNIQUES TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRECEPTOR RELATIONSHIP

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Clinical rotations can be the most challenging and exciting portion of nursing school. Finally having the opportunity to apply concepts learned from a textbook is exceptionally rewarding and to ensure success a preceptor is assigned to help navigate the foreign waters. This individual will have a huge part in developing your skills.

Here are some tips to ensure that you get the most out of your preceptor relationship:

1. Give 100% to every task.

It can be frustrating to spend time doing administrative tasks instead of learning new skills for patient care, but the reality is that this is what nursing can feel like on a day-to-day basis. Displaying that you have a great work ethic shows your preceptor that they can trust you with harder, more complex tasks. During this period of time, giving 100% to the specific task assigned and staying engaged in what is going on around you will ensure that you are still learning new skills. It also shows that you have a positive can-do attitude and will work well in a team environment.

2. Be vocal about your learning needs.

Everyone has their own learning style and vocalizing upfront how you learn best can help your preceptor know the most effective communication method. This does not mean that you do not need to adjust your learning style, but having open conversation helps set the stage for both parties. If you are a visual learner, tell your preceptor. If you learn best by understanding the bigger picture before you can learn the details, explain that as well!

Learning is a process that can change from concept to concept. There may be certain items that you immediately grasp because of previous life experience, while other may take reviewing it more thoroughly. If you do not feel comfortable with something and need more time to master it, communicating that will help ensure you get more reputation.

3. Ask questions!!

Preceptors love the curious student as it shows that you are engaged in the learning process. While you do have a responsibility to be prepared and knowledgeable for your clinical rotations and work towards being an independent worker, keep in mind that you are engaged in patient care. This means that patient safety is the number one priority and it is always better to ask for clarification than putting a patient at risk. Even if you feel like you grasp the specific skill, if you cannot answer why that skill is an important part of the plan of care, then more clarification is needed.

Finally, don't be afraid to challenge your preceptor and ask why they choose a specific method over another. Good preceptors enjoy being challenged and feel like mentee relationships keep them on top of their game!

These three techniques will help show your preceptor that you are worth the investment of their time and that you will provide value to the team even while you are in learning mode.