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Tips for building a relationship with your Preceptor

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1. Be early, be ready to learn and lend a hand. Being on time is a skill and it requires you to consistently develop it by going over the day's events, setting reminders, or making mental notes. Being on time or early shows respect for other people's time and is professional. Showing up early and eager to help is refreshing for your preceptor and the office, clinic, or hospital. You have given yourself and them extra time to get things ready, go over some teaching points for the day and the schedule of events/patients. They see your professional behavior as a reflection of your work ethic and how much you WANT to be there. Remember that no job is too small.

2. Dress and act the part. Make sure you are asking about the attire before showing up on the first day. If you need to be in scrubs, is a certain color preferred? Can you dress business casual? Are there rules for certain style clothing? Hair? Makeup? Jewelry? Shoes? This can often be overlooked but if you remember to ask the preceptor, they will gladly make sure you have all the details. Dressing the part will give you confidence, make you feel like part of the team, and will up your professional game.

3. Be sure to carry a reference tool. Whether it be a reference book, notebook or having a phone app, you always want to have a reference tool available to you.

precept students every semester and are versed in what you need to understand, what is critical, what can wait and how to get you the information that you need to continue learning. They have answered that same question before and are ready for you to just ask.

5. Do not pass judgment. Being judgmental of your preceptor is counterproductive. Passing judgement on your preceptor for any reason creates a wall between the two of you and can hinder your learning experience. Furthermore, and maybe more importantly do not pass judgement on patients. You may not have all the information and judging them for any reason can influence the quality of care you give.

6. Pack a lunch! You may not get time to leave and grab a bite. Think about bringing snacks that are easy to eat and keep them in your bag or lab coat. No one wants a hangry student.

7. Strive to give efficient patient presentations. Practice makes so much better. Practicing improving your patient presentation skills will be much appreciated by your preceptor.

8. Physical exam and histories mastery. Use the skills that you persistently practiced in the lab. Listen to your patients. Try not to interrupt them so that you do not miss something crucial. Just like patient presentations, practice will make you proficient.

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