TEACHING

Teaching is an aspect which has great value for confidence and with more time available and more learners, the experienced registrar has a lot to offer the medical student or F2 doctor. A recent registrar told one of the group that they hadn't realised how much they knew until they started to teach. One of the best ways to continue our life-long learning and affirm our knowledge and skills is to train and support learners. We make sure we are up to date, have things clear in our mind, and understand how issues fit together. No one would like to drop acorns that will never germinate!

These then are a few of the many ways we could build confidence given the opportunity of a longer training. However, perhaps the most important conclusion was for the trainers themselves to consider philosophically their role: Good trainers will ensure that the learner has confidence in the trainer, but the accomplished trainer will inspire the learner to have confidence in themselves.

Jeff Clark

REFERENCES

1. Sibbett C, Thompson WT, Crawford M, McKnight A. Learning in practice. *BMJ* 2003; **327**: 971–973.
2. Royal College of General Practitioners. *A review of GP speciality training in the UK. Interim report for the Department of Health*. http://www.rcgp.org.uk/gp_training/extended_gp_specialty_training.aspx (accessed 1 Dec 2009).
3. Tooke J. *Aspiring to excellence. Final report of the independent inquiry into modernising medical careers*. http://www.mmcinquiry.org.uk/MMC_FINAL_REPOR_T_REVD_4jan.pdf (accessed 1 Dec 2009).
4. Fraser SW, Greenhalgh T. Coping with complexity: educating for capability. *BMJ* 2001; **323**: 799–803.
5. Clark J. Insecurity and risk in the consultation. *Br J Gen Pract* 2009; **59**(564): 548–549.
6. Cates C. Delayed prescriptions in primary care. *Br J Gen Pract* 2003; **53**: 836–837.
7. Wall TD, Bolden RI, Borrill CS, et al. Minor psychiatric disorder in NHS trust staff: occupational and gender differences. *Br J Psychiatry* 1997; **171**: 519–523.
8. Iverson I, Rushford B, Forrest K. How to handle stress and look after your mental health. *BMJ* 2009; **338**: b1368. http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/338/apr27_1/b1368 (accessed 3 Dec 2009).
9. British Medical Association. *About Doctors For Doctors and BMA counselling*. London: BMA, 4 Feb 2008. http://www.bma.org.uk/doctors_health/D4Dabout.jsp (accessed 1 Dec 2009).

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp10X482211

ADVICE TO NEW ST1S IN GENERAL PRACTICE

I am an ST2 trainee who has spent two 4 months blocks working in general practice (in F2 and ST1 years). I was recently asked if I had any advice to give to new GP trainees. The following list represents some tips I have picked up during my training to date that may provide some illumination and/or entertainment.

1. Never accept tea on a home visit. It will be awful and you'll be there all day.
2. Be careful about offering medical advice to receptionists, etcetera. If you're not careful you will end up running a clinic with no notes and questionable legal cover (and the partners don't like it).
3. Always do a full examination of infants and record their vital signs (including capillary refill time and respiratory rate) regardless of what they are presenting with.
4. Know how to get help urgently.
5. Know how to provide help to other GPs urgently.
6. Revise Gillick competencies.
7. Make sure you know how to refer for a termination of pregnancy, as learning on the job isn't ideal.
8. Chaperone!
9. When someone says, 'I've got a list', ask for the most serious complaint first.
10. When an older gentleman presents with mechanical back pain, make sure he has had recent bloods including PSA.
11. Learn the prescribing criteria for Viagra®, men often seek out the new registrar.
12. Find out how to get in touch with the local school nurse. Also, many towns have an 'info shop' which is a great port of call for young adults who are upset/agitated/distressed/normal.
13. Phoning the medical registrar on call can be very useful. They are much less grumpy than the SHO and know more.
14. Many hospitals have a GP-oriented website that lists local referral criteria and antibiotic guidelines.
15. Ask all doctors at your practice to let you know whenever they have any dermatology cases.
16. Buy a thermometer that measures temperature in the ear or spend time wrestling with paediatric patients. It's your choice.
17. If a patient makes you feel scared, threatened or bad about yourself then talk to someone else about them.
18. Most practices have an attached community psychiatric nurse (CPN). Get to know them.
19. When a patient tells you they are pregnant don't say congratulations until you know they are happy about it.
20. Remind oral contraceptive pill users to take extra precautions when prescribing them antibiotics.
21. If the practice nurse asks you to review one of their patients, then review the patient.
22. Take in cake on your first and last day.
23. Find out the practice telephone number that bypasses the recorded stuff and gets you through to a receptionist straight away.
24. Get your supervisor's mobile number.
25. When your Friday afternoon list is over-running and going pear-shaped, remind yourself that you are not working on Saturday.
26. Go to the beach.
27. Get to know the local residential/nursing/EMI homes. It will come in handy.
28. Have a laugh. It's a long day without one.
29. Learn to say 'no'.
30. Find out the local 2-week rule criteria.
31. Know how to spot a malignant melanoma.
32. Anyone who feels they are poorly enough for a home visit should have vital signs recorded.
33. Learn to ride a motorcycle.
34. Don't ignore child protection concerns but do get help.
35. Never skip lunch.
36. Hit the ePortfolio hard in GP placements, you are seeing a lot and are sat at a computer. It's much harder in hospital jobs.
37. Book holiday early. Book holiday for your next job now.
38. The *Oxford Handbook of General Practice* is worth owning.
39. Find out how to get an urgent ECG done at your practice.
40. Beware the patient you don't like, they sometimes really do have something wrong with them!

Matthew Burkes

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp10X482220