How to Deal with the Difficult Student....

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Learning Objectives...

At the conclusion of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Define the categories that describe a difficult medical student
- Describe the SOAP approach to dealing with the difficult student
- Explain the benefits from having a systematic approach to the difficult medical student
How Do You Define the Difficult Medical Student???

Student Doctor Jones

• A 4th year student who just began a month-long rotation in Family Medicine with you
  • Your practice is office-based
  • This is day 4 of the rotation and you have noted:

  • <A> His presentation skills are below average
  • <B> His differential diagnosis ability is quite poor
Student Doctor Jones

- How are you going to approach student doctor Jones about these issues?
  - What types of things will you discuss?
  - How will you follow-up on this?
  - What are effective actions you can take to help resolve these issues?

Student Doctor Smith

- A 3rd year student who just began a month-long rotation in Internal Medicine with you
  - Your practice is office and hospital-based
  - This is his third rotation
  - This is day 3 of the rotation and you have noted:
    - <A> He has been late twice to the hospital rounds
    - <B> He appears unkempt with wrinkled clothes and a dirty lab coat
Student Doctor Smith

• How are you going to approach student doctor Smith about these issues??

  • What types of things will you discuss??
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How Do You Define the Difficult Medical Student???

• <1> Knowledge

• <2> Skills

• <3> Attitudes
How do you Approach the difficult student??

Table 1

PREVENTION

PRIMARY: Prevent the problem before it occurs.
- Know the course expectations.
- Orient the learner well.
- Set clear expectations and goals.
- Determine the learner’s goals and expectations.
- Reasses mid-course.

SECONDARY: Early Detection
- Pay attention to your hunches/dues.
- Don’t wait.
- Initiate SOAP early.
- Give specific feedback early and monitor closely.

TERTIARY: Manage a problem to minimize impact.
- If it ain’t workin’, SEEK HELP.
- Don’t be a martyr.
- Do not give a passing grade to a learner who has not earned it.
**Table 2: SOAP- An Approach to Problem Interactions**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>What do you/others think and say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>What are the specific behaviors that are observed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Your Differential Diagnosis of the Problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Gather more data? Intervene? Get help?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Assessment- Differential Diagnosis**

- Cognitive Knowledge base/ Clinical skills less than expected?
- Dyslexia?
- Spatial Perception Difficulties?
- Communication difficulties?
- Lack of effort/interest?
- Affective Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Fear
- Reluctant Expects a certain level of work
- Expects a certain grade
- Does not value the rotation
- Does not want to be at your site
- Does not value your teaching
- Holds principles that conflict with those of you or your patients
- Environmental Hospital-Care oriented
- Not used to undifferentiated patient
- Not time-sensitive
- Not patient-satisfaction oriented
- Medical Clinical Depression
- Anxiety Disorder/ Panic
- Recovering from Recent Illness
- Hypothyroidism
- Pre-existing Illness in poor control
- Psychosis
- Substance Abuse
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Tools for Dealing with the Difficult Student

• <1> Identify the issue(s) early
• <2> Seek input from others (if available)
• <3> Seek input from the student
• <4> Provide timely and effective feedback
• <5> Document and evaluate appropriately

Do They Have the Proper Tools??

• <1> An introduction/orientation
  • <A> Clearly defined expectations
  • <B> Clearly defined role

• <2> Being a Role model
  • <A> Set the example

• <3> Regular feedback/consistency
Any Questions??

The End...