

THE SELF-DISCIPLINE OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL

SEVEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE

Share these with your learners to clarify expectations

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BEING PRESENT

Your attendance in the hospital, clinic, lab or office and at lectures and meetings is *expected*, not optional. Be alert, focused, and ready to handle your assignments. This is a reflection of your commitment to your institution, your profession and, most importantly, your patients.

BEING PRESENTABLE

As a clinician, you should always dress in a professional manner and project a professional image in the way you talk and behave. This facilitates the process of building trust with patients and colleagues.

BEING PUNCTUAL

Other people's time is just as valuable to them as your time is to you. Respect it (and them) by being on time for assignments. If you're going to be late, call ahead or offer a *sincere* apology when you arrive.

BEING PREPARED

When you arrive at the hospital, clinic, office, lab or classroom, be ready to handle your assigned tasks and duties. Set aside time each night to read up on patients and/or to review the next day's procedures. Think of each patient as a "test" and ask, "*How prepared am I to take these tests today?*" At the end of each day, ask yourself, "*How well did I do on the tests I took today?*" *Daily reflection, review, revision, and remediation are the keys to life-long learning.*

BEING POLITE

The most challenging aspect of being a professional is maintaining a calm demeanor, especially during stressful encounters. Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior cannot be justified by how you feel (e.g., "I yelled because I was angry"). Avoid distractions from electronic devices during important conversations with patients and colleagues. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Remember, "please" and "thank you" never go out of style!

BEING PROFICIENT

Always look for ways to improve your performance. Feel good about your successes and accomplishments but don't "rest on your laurels." As you develop confidence and competence in your clinical skills, strive to excel. Use persistence and perseverance to turn your mistakes and failures into learning opportunities.

BEING PROACTIVE

Throughout your personal and professional growth, take the initiative to conduct regular self-assessments (what you know and can do) and self-evaluations (how well you do things) to identify your strengths as well as any deficiencies and/or areas for improvement. Learn to *integrate your life* by identifying and anticipating the *flashpoints* when your professional duties and obligations intersect with the demands of your personal life. Determine the differing needs to be met in these situations and develop strategies as well as contingency plans to ensure that you effectively handle them.

BEING PERFECT