

Tips for TOP mentors: Clinical Settings

PREPARATION

- Contact the faculty member you'll be observing in advance for the purposes of introduction and also to confirm that the scheduled day is a good one (not a bad day in call cycle, an unexpected skeleton team, etc).
- Discuss how you can best help the teacher: would she like you to focus on any specific aspects of her teaching (structure, pacing, handling questions, etc.)?
- This is a good time to remind the teacher that the feedback from you is confidential and the TOP program was created to provide opportunities for improvement rather than criticism.
- Set up a time for (~30 min.) you to give feedback. Try to do this sooner than later to get the biggest benefit. (Sometimes it helps you to have at least a short amount of time for reflection and writing comments before meeting).
- Discuss details such as how you will be introduced to the trainees and patients ("this is part of faculty development"), steps you will take to not interfere with group dynamics, and ask if you need to know exactly who the learners are and where they are in the rotation.
- Review the observation form beforehand to remind yourself of the teaching techniques and domains you want to take note of.
- Take two copies of the observation form with you so you can give a clean copy to the teacher along with your feedback.

OBSERVATION

- Make specific notes (use examples) and consolidate your thoughts into a few main points (three maximum) that will be most beneficial to the students and to the teacher.
- Separate yourself from the clinical issues and avoid interjections.
- Remaining focused on the learning environment and teaching effectiveness.

FEEDBACK

- Emphasize again that your conversation is confidential and that we are hoping to foster a culture where it is normal and welcomed to have teachers observe and improve each other.
- Begin by asking the teacher to self-critique – both strengths and areas for improvement
- Concentrate on the teaching style and how it can be improved (rather than the differences with *your* teaching style).
- Remember to direct feedback to any areas she asked you to focus on.
- Leave time for the teacher to respond to your feedback.