**The First Week of Clinical Rotation—Starting Out Right**

As a Clinical Instructor, your primary goals for any student probably include: maximizing learning opportunities, enhancing independence in patient care, and improving the student’s ability to problem-solve and critically think. These are the students’ goals, as well.

In order to create an atmosphere, from the beginning, that supports these goals, it is helpful to create a comfortable and supportive environment for the student. Taking the following steps during the student’s first week of clinical rotation can assist in this regard.

* Introduce the student to all staff members, include their names and their roles, and explain to the student if there are individual “teams” within this group to be aware of or “critical people” with whom the student should become familiar.
* Give the student a tour of the facility. Don’t forget to including bathrooms, break rooms, and cafeteria. Provide a map, when necessary, if one is available.
* Show the student where equipment is kept within the therapy department, as well as within other areas of the facility, if the student will be required to acquire this equipment.
* Complete any other orientation activities that your facility requires.
* Remember that this first week can be overwhelming. Try to spread any introductory / orientation activities out **throughout** this first week instead of trying to complete them all in one day.
* The student will arrive with a personal list of Strengths, Areas to Improve, and Goals for the clinical. Review these with the student and determine whether there are any other goals you or the student would like to add.
* Provide a list of your expectations for the student (see the attached optional “CI Expectations Form” for an idea of what student should know).
* Discuss with the student how he/she learns best (i.e. via reading, verbally discussing, demonstration, trial and error, etc…) so you can attempt to better meet the student’s learning needs.
* Find out how the student likes to acquire feedback and communicate (i.e. in the moment, in private, after he/she has had time to think about what just occurred, in “chunks” at certain times of day, etc…) and create a plan for ongoing communication. Don’t forget to inform the student of **your** preferred style of communication, as well!
* Introduce your student to the scheduling system, the documentation system, and any other important systems within your facility. You can expand upon them at a later time.
* Because students have different levels of comfort, be open regarding how much hands-on patient care the student participates in on the first several days. Students should never spend the entire first week doing nothing but observing. All students should be encouraged to take on **pieces** of treatment in this first week or assist you throughout treatments. Some may even be comfortable performing an entire treatment on a simpler patient, if you have determined that they are ready.
* Allow and encourage the student to carry a clipboard or notebook to write much of this information down, as the initial week’s information can be overwhelming.
* Above all else, help the student to feel a part of the therapy team!