

# For House Officers on How to be a mentor to Third Year Medical Students

## **Let them be students:**

Third year students have two sets of mentors: their preceptor, and their ward team. While they are to learn by doing, it is also their last chance to be students and they must read, complete their write-ups, and prepare for preceptor sessions. Hence they should be active members of the team, and do as much as possible in the service of the care of their patients, but they should not be doing menial tasks (“scut”) on other patients.

## **Let them work up new patients independently :**

Encourage the student, whenever possible, to take a history and do a physical examination independently, and before they review all the phenomenology recorded in the electronic record. This will reinforce their basic skills, and they will come up with new and helpful information.

## **Let them go home:**

Nights on call, they should pick up two patients, and then go home (by 9-10pm). They will need to read, prepare at least one presentation for rounds, and complete their write-up for their preceptor.

## **Work with them on their presentations:**

The goal is to present precisely and succinctly from memory. Encourage students to synthesize and be succinct, to try to think of the HPI as a story, and to practice out loud at home.

## **Let their preceptor work with them on their write-ups:**

Their write-ups will be corrected by the preceptor.

**Help them learn to do basic procedures** (blood draws, I.V.s. L.P.s) with supervision from a credentialed resident. This should be with the patient's permission and limited to the patients they are following.

## **Encourage them to be the pathophysiology expert on your team:**

They should be reinforcing all that they learned in their first two years and bringing it to life in the context of clinical medicine: assign them topics to research and teach the team. Encourage them to go to textbooks and their first and second year resources, rather than UpToDate which tends to be very pragmatic, but not as rich in explaining underlying mechanisms of disease.

## **Feedback:**

Observe and describe  
Solicit and incorporate the student's reactions  
Frequent and focused; positive and negative  
Specific and concrete

## **Evaluation :**

Your observations are critical to the evaluation process. Their performance on the wards counts toward approximately 40% of their grade. You will be invited to come to an evaluation session and/or to submit your evaluation via email to the course director.

Do : evaluate based on direct observation of each of the competency domains; think about how they are progressing towards thinking independently: reporter, interpreter, manager.

Do not : give an opinion regarding their grade: there are many other perspectives that go into their final grade.

Concerns:

Contact me! [kgn1@columbia.edu](mailto:kgn1@columbia.edu), #6639; 305-9388.