Pharmacy Practice Experiences: Handling Problem Students

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Disclosure

- I have no relevant financial relationship or commercial interest to disclose in conjunction with this presentation.
Learning Objectives

- Recognize potential student problems during pharmacy practice experiences
- Devise a plan to handle difficult student situations and describe the logical order in handling them
- Describe grounds for failing a student and the proper steps of documentation
Handling Potential Problems

■ Preventing problems is one of the primary goals of the preceptor. This may be accomplished by appropriate orientation on day one.
  ■ Required objectives, activities, expectations
  ■ Starting and ending times
  ■ Policies and procedures
  ■ Dress code, absence policy, sick days, parking, etc.
  ■ HIPPA compliance
  ■ Introduction to appropriate health professionals and staff
  ■ Tour of the facilities
Handling Potential Problems

- If you detect problems, speak with the student immediately
- Make sure they are aware of the consequences of their behavior
- If the student continues, the preceptor must decide to impose sanctions.
  - Progressions
  - Grade reduction
  - Failing rotation
  - Contact Experiential Director at any time
Professionalism

- Pharmacy practice is a profession that requires adherence to strict professional and ethical standards

- Students represent the University, College and the Profession and are expected to act with honor and integrity at all times

- Unprofessional behavior may result in the student being placed on probation or expelled from the program
Professionalism

Examples of qualities that constitute professional and ethical behavior, the student should:

- Be consistent
- Be prepared
- Be punctual
- Be respectful
- Have good interpersonal skills
- Be receptive to feedback
- Follow all policies and procedures
- Promote trust
- Maintain a professional appearance
- Be accountable
- Be empathetic towards others
Handling the Difficult Student

■ Scenario: A student is creating a problem.

■ Subjective:
  ■ What do you and others say? Get feedback from other preceptors or staff that have had this student.

■ Objective:
  ■ Document specific incidences or situations with dates.

■ Assessment:
  ■ Based upon your subjective and objective findings coupled with input from others, try to diagnosis the problem.

■ Devise a Plan:
  ■ Talk with the student about your concerns
  ■ Talk to the college to see if they are aware of previous problems?
  ■ Make sure the student is aware of the consequences if problems continue.
    ■ Progressions, grade reduction, failing the rotation.
Potential Problem Scenarios

- **Problem:** Preceptor is busy and does not have time for the student.

- **Solution:**
  - Have them start tomorrow's assignment.
  - Have them look up labs and explain each index.
  - Have them interview patients.
  - Have them start a Excel spreadsheet indicating the Clcr on each patient.
  - Have them prepare a presentation on a specific topic or prepare for an in-service.
  - Finds something for them to do that is not just busy work.
Potential Problem Scenarios

Problem: The subject for today is not one of your strong points.

- Have the student teach you.
- “This isn’t one of my strong points. Why don’t you teach me about this tomorrow and we will both learn something.”
- Bring in a colleague who has more experience on the subject, i.e. Oncology, IVs, etc.
- Don’t pretend to know something you don’t.
Potential Problem Scenarios

- Problem: Student is not motivated. Does not do assignments.

- Solution:
  - Relay your feeling to the student as soon as possible. Make sure the student knows the problem.
  - Determine if there is a reason for the problem.
  - Contact the Experiential Director to see if this has happened on other rotations.
  - If the problem continues make sure the student is aware of the consequences.
  - Progressions, grade reduction or rotation failure.
  - Document everything.
Potential Problem Scenarios

- **Problem:** The student is continually late or wears inappropriate attire.
- **Solution:**
  - Relay your feelings to student as soon as possible.
  - Explain that the policies and procedures of the facility were explained during orientation and they will be followed.
  - If that solves the problem, no further action is required.
  - If the problem continues the student should be asked to leave the rotation site with a failure.
Potential Problem Scenarios

■ **Problem:** Student and preceptor do not get along.

■ **Solution:**

■ Talk with the student and express your concerns.

■ The student may not always agree with you, but he or she MUST be respectful at all times.

■ Contact the college if you do not get satisfaction after the initial talk with the student.

■ Do not continue back and forth with the conversation.

■ If the problem is not resolved, ask the student to leave the facility.

■ The preceptor, like the boss, is always right.
Potential Problem Scenarios

- Problem: Suspected plagiarism.

  - Solution:
    - Ask the student to supply the references used.
    - The student must comply with the request.
    - On the basis of the information, the preceptor may decide to impose a penalty.
    - If the penalty is only a warning or a demand that the work be resubmitted, no further action is needed.
    - If it’s decided that academic dishonesty has occurred, the preceptor may decide to impose a sanction.
    - Progressions, grade reduction or failing the rotation.
Potential Problem Scenarios

Problem: Continued Absences

- APPEs consist of 6 weeks, 40 hours a week for total of 240 hours per rotation.
- Students are required to be at the practice site in accordance with the schedule of the particular site, including nights and weekends.
- Absences may be excused in the even of:
  - Unforeseen emergencies
  - Unusual circumstances
  - Illnesses
  - Severe weather
Potential Problem Scenarios

Problem: Absences Continued:

- Any foreseeable absences must be pre-approved by the preceptor.
- All absences are expected to be made up.
- Continual unexcused absences or tardiness are grounds for failure of the rotation.
- The only designated holiday during the APPE year is during the Christmas break between blocks 5 and 6.
Failing A Student

- **Problem:** Failing a student.

- **Solution:**
  - **No Surprises:**
    - Make sure that this is not a surprise to the student.
    - If a student is not doing well on rotation, this should be discussed weekly with the student.

- **Documentation:**
  - Documenting why the student is failing is absolutely necessary.
Warning:  
- Warning the student prior to failing is also necessary.  
- Giving a student an update on how they are doing once every 2 weeks is appropriate with a mid-term review at 3 weeks.

Reporting:  
- The primary preceptor and the Experiential Director should be aware of the situation.
APPE ROTATIONS

- APPE Core Rotations
  - Advanced Community
  - Ambulatory Care
  - Hospital (Institutional)
  - Medicine
APPE Continued

P-Care Rotations
- Anticoagulation
- Cardiology
- Consulting
- Critical Care
- Drug Information
- Diabetes/Endocrine
- Emergency/OR
- Geriatrics
- Home Health
- Implementing Quality
- Infectious Disease
- Intensive Care
- Long Term Care
- Managed Care
- Medication Safety
- Mental Health
- Nuclear Medicine
- Nutrition
- Oncology
- Pediatrics
- Pediatric Intensive Care
- Rehabilitation
- Surgery
- Transplantation
APPE CONTINUED

Elective Rotations

- Academics
- Board of Pharmacy
- Compounding
- Consulting
- Pharmacy Management
- Research
ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS
Preventing the majority of problems on a rotation can be accomplished by appropriate orientation on day one.

1. True
2. False
Professionalism problems, such as continually being tardy, can result in failure of the rotation.

1. **True**
2. **False**
When failing a student, documentation of why the student is failing is absolutely necessary.

1. True
2. False