

Graduate Medical Education Teaching Tip # 1 The 5-Step Microskills Method for Clinical Teaching

Objectives:

1. Learn the 5-Step Microskills model of clinical teaching
2. Apply this technique daily during rounds with junior residents and medical students

The 5-Step Microskills Method

1. **Get a Commitment** because this encourages learner to process clinical information further and begin to problem solve.
 - a. Examples...
 - i. "What do you think is going on with this patient?"
 - ii. "What would you like to do next?"
 - iii. "What other types of information do you feel are needed?"
 - iv. "What would you like to accomplish in this visit?"
 - v. "Why do you think the patient has been non-compliant?"
2. **Probe for Supporting Evidence** because it will help you to assess the learners knowledge and uncover learners reasoning process for arriving at their conclusion.
 - a. Examples...
 - i. "What were the major findings that led to your conclusion?"
 - ii. "What else did you consider?"
 - iii. "What are the key features of this case?"
 - iv. "What questions are arising in your mind?"
 - v. "What factors support your diagnosis?"
 - vi. "Why did you choose that treatment?"
3. **Reinforce What Was Done Well** because behavior specific positive feedback will promote and encourage desirable clinical behaviors.
 - a. Examples
 - i. "I liked that your differential took into account the patient's age, recent exposures, & symptoms."
 - ii. "Considering an intestinal injury in the patient with slight abdominal bruising from a lap-belt injury allowed for early surgical intervention. We were able to repair that small perforation without an ostomy or drain since it was caught so early."
 - iii. "You considered pneumonia as a cause of this patient's abdominal pain. This consideration led to a diagnosis of lobar pneumonia in this patient, avoiding an unnecessary operation."

4. **Give Guidance About Errors or Omissions** because corrects mistakes, discourages incorrect behaviors, corrects misconceptions, and forms foundation for improvement
 - a. Examples
 - i. "During the ear exam the patient seemed uncomfortable. Let's go over holding the otoscope."
 - ii. "You are still struggling with your suturing technique. Everting the edges of the tissue just a bit will allow for better healing."
 - iii. "Although trimethoprim/sulfa will kill streptococcus in the laboratory and in some places in the body, it does not cover strep throat infection."
5. **Teach a General Principle** because helps learner to effectively generalize knowledge gained from this specific case to other clinical situations.
 - a. Examples
 - i. "Remember 10-15% of people are carriers of streptococcus, which can lead to false positive strep tests."
 - ii. "Patients with appendicitis often have loss of appetite, abdominal pain that is generalized and then migrates to McBurney's Point. Urinalysis on these patients can reveal a positive leukocyte esterase, although they have sterile urine cultures. Usually, there is no diarrhea or colitis symptoms present."
 - iii. "If the patient only has cellulitis, incision and drainage is not possible. You have to wait until the area becomes fluctuant to drain it."
6. **Wrap Up or Conclusion** because it limits time and directs remainder of the encounter with the patient.
 - a. Example
 - i. "Let's go back in the room and I'll show you how to get a good throat swab. Tell me when we have the results, and I'll watch you go over the results and treatment plan."