

Seven Basic Professional Traits and Their Observable Noncognitive Behaviors, Used in the Evaluation of Students at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine

Reliability and responsibility

Can be depended upon to do his or her duty
Follows through on tasks he or she agreed to perform
Arrives on time for class, clinic, rounds, etc.

Maturity

Behaves respectfully
Accepts blame for failure
Makes inappropriate demands
Is abusive and critical during times of stress

Critique

Accepts criticism
Looks at self objectively
Takes steps to correct shortcomings
Reacts to criticism

Communication skills

Listens well
Engages in blocking behaviors:
 hostile, derogatory, sarcastic,
 loud or disruptive distraction,
 verbal and/or nonverbal cues of
 nonparticipation
Effectively identifies emotional concerns of patients
Uses language appropriate to circumstances

Honesty and integrity

Adheres to professional and/or ethical standards
Is honest
Corrects errors

Respect for patients

Maintains patient's confidentiality
Demonstrates empathetic behavior
Is patient with patient and family
Is sensitive to patient's immediate physical and/or emotional needs
Is not racist
Is considerate to patients
Addresses patients appropriately

Shows signs of chemical dependency or mood disorder

Change in personality, dressing habits, or neatness
Excessive irritability, anger beyond control
Apparent mental confusion, drowsiness, inattention to responsibility
Loud when normally quiet, inappropriate euphoria
Depressed
Unsteady gait

Note 1: Next to each observable item is a five-point scale ranging from 1 (acceptable) to 5 (severe problem). Room is provided for a brief, detailed description of the incident that raised concern.

Note 2: From: "Phelan S, Obenshain SS, Galey WR. Evaluation of the noncognitive professional traits of medical students. Acad Med. 1993;68:799-803." Reprinted with permission from Academic Medicine.