

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A CLINICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

As clinical educators, you provide the critical link between the academic and clinical environments. Through your instruction and insight, interns are provided the opportunity to refine basic knowledge, skills and behavior. They must learn the peculiarities of the work environment and the profession. Large numbers of patients with increasingly complex pathologies, multiple professional responsibilities, assimilation of new techniques, and time limitations must all be juggled to achieve the desired outcome of becoming a competent physical therapist.

The following section deals with some ideas that you may find useful in maximizing your effectiveness in clinical teaching. These are merely suggestions and will need to be individually tailored depending upon many factors, including the level of intern, type of rotation, and resources available to the clinic. Structure of this nature is intended only to enhance, not limit, the learning experience.

Please consider sending interns a *pre-internship packet* prior to their arrival. Students typically find this information very helpful. This could include:

- Welcome cover letter, including the clinical instructor's name and contact information
- Information sheet (clinic hours, meals, housing, parking, transportation, housing, dress code, and directions to facility with map, etc.)
- First day schedule
- Clinical experience/internship goals and objectives
- General information on facility and geographic area

You also may wish to create an *orientation checklist*. An orientation checklist allows clinical instructors and clinical coordinators to easily ensure that interns have been exposed to all necessary aspects of the facility. This can be especially useful in larger, more complex facilities where there may be an overwhelming amount of information to remember. A checklist might cover:

- Introduction to all staff and management
- Facility tour
- General facility information

- Policies and procedures (organizational structure and hierarchy of entire clinic staff; dress code; clinic hours; health, accident and emergency procedures)
- Office procedures (telephones, patient scheduling, billing, filing, mail)
- Miscellaneous forms (confidentiality, job reference release, etc.)
- Patient care procedures (staffing, rounds, conferences, transportation, and utilization of ancillary personnel, standard protocols)
- Orientation to documentation procedures
- Clinical education philosophy statement
- CI and CCCE responsibilities
- Goals and expectations of intern and CI (can review Intern Profile form and specific objectives outlines in Clinical Education Manual)
- Overall internship timeline and schedule (can relate to daily and weekly goals and activities)
- Weekly goals and objectives for the internship
- List of possible options for observation in other disciplines, special procedures, surgeries, inservices, etc.

Finally, an *intern manual* can be a very worthwhile way to pull your whole clinical education program together. A manual might include:

- Orientation checklist and the information it covers
- All of the information listed in the pre-internship packet
- PT staff demographics (education, years of practice, area of expertise, etc.)
- Intern responsibilities (patient care related, inservice/case study information, intern and facility/CI evaluation forms)
- Selected references, journal articles, etc.

More detailed information can be found in the “Reference Manual for CCCE’s” at the end of this chapter.