



## **Steps to Getting the Most Out of Your Health Professions Shadowing Experience**

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***The key to shadowing is learning about, growing in, and more fully understanding your field of interest. Make the most of your shadowing experience!***

**STEP 1: It's your first day shadowing! WHOOW! -** Be kind, courteous, and most of all show some excitement towards learning and becoming a part of your health profession. Your passion and excitement will leave a lasting impression. Remember that the staff will be observing you as well so be engaged and ask questions demonstrating your desire to learn.

### **What to expect and what to do.**

- Expect
  - To be standing around and watching everything the healthcare professional does.
  - To possibly feel awkward or out of place.
  - The health professional may ask the patient if they are okay with you observing and a patient may say no. If this is the case, just wait where the provider tells you to and don't take it personally. Some patients just aren't comfortable with observers.
- Do
  - Ignore any awkwardness or feeling of being out of place while a procedure or consultation is happening. Everyone who has shadowed has been through it! Consider it a rite of passage of sorts.
  - Greet everyone and smile. Address everyone formally unless told otherwise.
  - BRING SOMETHING SMALL TO TAKE NOTES ON! Pay attention to:
    - People to observe:
      - The health professional, other employees, patients, and their families
    - Work environment factors to observe:
      - Workload and pace, teamwork and team cohesion, communication styles, attitude, and work values
    - Work style factors to observe:
      - Skills required, procedures/interventions being performed, type and length of patient interaction, equipment used, and variety of tasks performed
  - ASK QUESTIONS – come prepared with a few questions to ask when things are slow. Speak to everyone in the office and try to learn about their positions as well.
  - Don't interrupt a procedure. Remember you're a guest so stand back to allow the providers space to do their job.

- Dress business casual, unless directed otherwise. No jeans, sweats, leggings, sweatshirts, logos, or t-shirts.
  - Women: Slacks, blouse or button shirt, dress, skirt, heels, or nice flats
  - Men: Slacks, Khakis, button shirt, polo, and dress shoes

**STEP 2: Be engaged:** Show interest and ask questions to find out what you want to know.

- Some good questions are:
  - Why did you choose this career?
  - What do you like best and least about your job?
  - What is the hardest part of your job?
  - If you had to do it over, would you consider the same career?
  - How do you to balance your family/personal life with this career?
  - How has the industry changed since you began working in it?
  - What is your advice on applying to, and choosing, a health professions school?
  - What are some trends you see in this profession?
  - How do you continue to grow your education or skills?

**STEP 3: Day one is done.** Figure out what you learned about the position and the people who work in this profession.

- Do you learn about their:
  - Lifestyle
  - Work schedule
  - Reasons to do [a procedure, process etc.] a certain way
  - Why they chose this career
  - What they enjoy about their career
  - Patient interactions
  - Skills required
  - Office dynamics
  - The challenges of the career

**STEP 4: Reflect:** The key to determining if this is the best career path for you!

- Within a week of each observation, complete this online [FORM](#).
- Within three days of completing your observation, send a thank you note to the healthcare provider. Thank you cards are available in the Health Professions office and we will cover the postage when you drop the addressed note back off to us.

**STEP 5: Next steps:** If you are interested in observing this office again or another provider, reach out to [Randi](#) to set up your next opportunity.