

The following are points to keep in mind during your encounter with the SP.

Introduction

- Always knock before entering the room.
- When you enter the room, introduce yourself by name and greet the SP warmly.
- Always use the SP's name to address him/her.
- Maintain good eye contact. This demonstrates self-confidence and creates a sense of trust and credibility.
 - During abdominal palpation, for example, observe the patient's face for any signs of pain or discomfort and maintain eye contact.

History

- Start with open-ended questions before specific questions, as this is the best way to elicit a patient's history.
 - "What caused you to come in today?"
 - "Could you please tell me more about what's going on?"
- Ask 1 question at a time and do not ask leading questions.
- Ask a question, pause, and wait for the answer before proceeding to the next question.
 - For example, "Does anyone in your family have high blood pressure?" (Pause and wait for the answer).
 - "Diabetes?" (Pause and wait for the answer).
- Always pay attention and listen without interrupting.
- Try to acknowledge the SP's emotions.
- Use layman's language.
 - Try not to use medical terms, such as hypertension for high blood pressure.
- Use appropriate transitional sentences.

Physical examination

- Wash your hands before starting the physical examination.
- Tell the SP what you are going to do (one step at a time, not the entire procedure).
- Do not examine through the gown.
- Ask the SP's permission before untying the gown.
- Use appropriate draping techniques.
 - The general rule is that as little of the body should be exposed as necessary for a set of maneuvers to be performed.
 - To auscultate the heart or lungs, do NOT raise the gown up from the waist, exposing the entire torso.
 - Rather, the SP should lower the gown from the top, exposing only the upper chest and shoulders.
- Offer to help the SP on and off the table during the examination.
- Never repeat painful maneuvers and always apologize immediately for any pain they caused.
- Express empathy.
 - Try to make the SP comfortable during the examination.
 - Extend the leg rest when the SP lies back and push it in when the SP sits up.
 - If the SP is in pain, ask if there is anything you can do to help him/her feel more comfortable.

Conclusion

- Summarize the history and explain the physical examination findings.
- Make appropriate reassurances but do not give false reassurances.
- **Never forget to ask "Do you have any questions or concerns?"**