

COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBLY IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

Everyday Behaviors

- Walk into your internship site grateful to the professionals who gave you this opportunity. Show your gratitude by greeting people with a smile. Thank everyone for their efforts, not just the supervisor. Often the length of your tenure will be determined by how well you work with the administrative staff.
- Look for ways you can help out on-site; do not wait to be asked.
- If you are shy, pretend that you are confident. Act as if you are confident!
- Be curious. Ask thoughtful questions.
- When given extraordinary learning opportunities, show your gratitude and share with your mentor the new insights that this opportunity gave you.

Use of Time

The biggest communication difference is in the area of time management. Professionals are time-starved. They have a great many people and projects pulling them in many directions. Therefore, they plan what must be accomplished each day in order to meet their professional responsibilities. If you ask your mentor to do something at the last minute, you are forcing him/her to say, "No." Mentors cannot allow your lack of preparation to impact their performance. It is up to you to present your mentor with enough time to accomplish the evaluation, review the paper, or set up the presentation.

Written Communication

- Keep all written communication formal. You are not your mentor's peer. You may call your mentor by his/her first name, but you are not on his/her professional level. Your formal tone is a sign of respect.
- Write a thank you note or email after your start-up conference. In that note, share your gratitude and confirm your starting date.
- Review your schedule on a weekly and monthly basis before you go to the mentor's site. Send your mentor an email message to let him/her know what assignments are coming up.
- If changes have to be made to your schedule, set up those arrangements in writing two weeks in advance.
- Remind mentors when quarterly evaluations are due. Give them your materials at least five to seven business days in advance.
- Proofread and spell-check all written communication that you send to your mentor.