

PRIMARY CARE 10 TOP TIPS

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Advice for new GPs

1 Patients, families and carers will remember more of how you do things rather than what you do.

2 You have completed your formal training, but should never stop learning. Support and advice will always be available from colleagues in both primary and secondary care.

3 Effective communication is key to all successful human interactions. As with other skills, communication can improve with practice and experience and most effectively when you reflect on what you are doing.

4 Seek to understand – only achieved by “total listening”, requiring your undivided attention and all of your senses.

5 An agreed, shared understanding with patients provides the sound foundation for a shared plan of how to proceed.

6 Understand your role as the patient’s advocate, balanced by your responsibilities for wider services. Seeking best possible care for your patients will be greatly appreciated.

7 Discussing difficult issues with colleagues can help your understanding, especially of the components that “belong” to you – the bits that you can work on and change.

8 Understand the impact on patients and families of the fragmentation of care – think about how you can help with this. Examples – ensuring good communication with out-of-hours providers, thinking systemically about the patient, family and carers recognising their physical, psychological and social needs.

9 Think about other ways to provide patients and carers with some security in uncertain times – for example, has the practice got a separate phone line that can bypass queuing to permit rapid access?

10 Remember the care in palliative care.

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