

Halfway Through Clinicals

It is the halfway mark of my final year in PT school. Currently completed one 12 week rotation and am halfway through the second rotation. The amount of growth that has happened is exponential. I have not only grown with my PT skills, but also with the mental and emotional aspects of being a PT. The patients over the past 18 weeks have taught me more than they might ever imagine. There are certain aspects of PT that cannot be taught in the classroom and that is what I am discovering every day of my clinical experience.

I am finding that relating to patients on a “body, mind, spirit” level is really important to the healing process as a whole. One patient that comes to mind has been in PT for the past three years and has a lot of personal conflicts influencing her emotional state. At the start of treating her, I found it difficult to connect with how she was feeling because I could not relate any situation in my life to compare with what she is going through. Over time, I found that it was important to show this patient that when she came to PT she could count on my CI and myself to be there for emotional and physical support. While this relationship did not happen overnight, it took time to gain that mutual trust, but she has started to open up and show her vulnerable side.

This helped me discover that the healing process is different for every person, and to some individuals it drains their energy on both an emotional and physical level. It is healthy for patients to go through different stages of healing and show their vulnerable side. To me, that shows that we have reached a connection, a mutual trust in each other and can move forward in treatment together. It is patients like these that have made me, and will continue to make me a better therapist in the future.

Another circumstance in which patients have helped better my future as a physical therapist are the ones that demonstrate patience and acceptance of me being a student. I am extremely appreciative towards those patients, as they are entrusting their confidence in my responsibility of their treatment. They are letting

me use their treatment as a part of my learning experience. Without them I would not be able to succeed towards my future endeavors.

It is a special feeling to me knowing that the patients have confidence in me at this phase in my career. When the patients acknowledge the fact that students are fresh with new knowledge that they are eager to use, it makes me excited to treat them. I find that I want to try to utilize the new skills that I have worked so hard to develop and I am willing to try everything it takes to make the patient leave feeling better. With that desire might come more time and effort on my part, but it never feels like extra work. It is exciting to me to solve the puzzle that the patients walk in with everyday, and each time it is a different puzzle.

The patients are very much a part of my education and learning experience. They will continue to contribute to my learning experience and growth as a therapist for the rest of my career. I hope that I never stop learning or growing as a physical therapist and as a person in general. Physical therapy continues to develop and change over the years; it is my job to keep up with the changes and grow with the profession in order to provide the best care for the patients. I feel it is my responsibility to give back to the patients because they have provided me with growth, learning experiences, friendships, and the ability to discover who I want to be as a physical therapist.