

May I Have a Word?

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Tips for Clinical Fellows: More Than Surviving Your First Year

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GET ORGANIZED

- Weed through all of the papers, manuals, and orientation/training materials you received and make a list of all important deadlines in progressive order. This will ensure you stay on top of them!
- Make a spreadsheet schedule of when you see clients/students, laminate it, and follow it!
- Print a list of your clients/students in order of when annual reviews and reevaluations are due.
- If you're overloaded with initial evaluations to complete, pick a feasible number of evaluations to be completed weekly. Schedule those and pat yourself on the back when you accomplish the number you set, even if it's just one or two weekly.
- When first getting to know your clients/students, place simple abbreviations of their goals on the data sheets you're utilizing to quickly jog your memory about their challenge areas. Even if your main target for the therapy session is X, you can be indirectly addressing Y or Z as well.
- Be prepared for meetings. If you know certain topics, disorders, or clients/students will be discussed, if you are unfamiliar with that subject, do your homework. You don't have to know it all, but aim to gain the trust of those around you by adding to the discussion.
- Maintain open and frequent communications with your CFY supervisor.

GET CREATIVE

- As you build your "tool box" of therapy materials, think functional, relevant, and motivational. Invest in materials that will motivate your clients/students to invest themselves in their own progress.

- Don't merely make plans for great therapy sessions...carry them out!

GET INVOLVED

- Make yourself readily available to family members, parents, teachers, administrators, and coworkers. Be an approachable point of contact for questions or concerns. If you don't know the answer, there's always opportunity to look it up!
- Know your clients'/students' birthdays and other important information. We all like to know that we're more than just a name (or number on a caseload).
- Take part in your clients'/students' special activities or life events when possible.

GET NOTICED

- Develop a simple monthly or quarterly newsletter for family members, parents, teachers, administrators and/or coworkers. Let the first one be an introduction to yourself and market yourself as a resource on speech and language issues. Because we're all inundated with things to read and little time to read them, make each newsletter short, concise, and interesting.
- Prepare a bulletin board accentuating your services or an area of interest or benefit to your clients/students. Don't wait until May when *Better Speech and Hearing Month* comes around!

"If a man is called a streetsweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, Here lived a great streetsweeper who did his job well."

Martin Luther King, Jr.