

Observation Tips

1. Do It!

The downside to observation is that it takes time. Therefore, the best way to ensure that observations will occur is to *select a few specific activities* that you will make a conscious effort to observe (e.g., a history taking, a portion of a physical exam, a brief patient education counseling session, etc.).

2. Active Watching

In active listening, the goal is to provide feedback regarding what you heard mainly in the form of a paraphrase. By doing so, you give the individual an opportunity to *reflect* on what has just been said, rather than reacting to any interpretation or judgment of it. The same is true of observations. By thinking "active watching," you can remind yourself to make a conscious effort to *describe* what you are seeing before you make any judgments about it.

3. Be Observed

An excellent way to further develop your observational skills is to help the student develop his or hers. All it takes is to *ask the student to observe something you are doing* and then describe it to you.

Example: "During the next three patient encounters, I want you to observe how I bring closure to the encounter."