

# IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER DURING THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT



## **Review Available Data**

Quickly review the chart prior to performing your assessment. Note the patient's name, age, address, race, occupation, and religion. This will provide you with an idea of the patient's lifestyle and will avoid asking repetitive questions.

## **Establish Rapport**

Always greet the patient in a friendly, non-threatening manner. Use "Mr", "Mrs", or similar titles unless the patient is a child or adolescent. Explain your relationship to the patient's care. During introductions many patients are often trying to figure out what they believe the examiner thinks of them. If the impression is good, the patient is more likely to be satisfied and cooperate with the examination.

An example of an introductory statement in relation to health assessment performance is,

"I will be taking a health history and performing a physical assessment to help meet your health care needs. The assessment will also provide a baseline picture of your health status so that we can notice any changes in your condition."

## **Control Environment**

If in a semi-private room, ensure maximum privacy by drawing the divider curtain. This is a time to excuse the family, if possible, so the patient can provide candid responses to sensitive issues of which the family may not be aware. Hostile or intoxicated people or persons who have been abusing chemical substances may feel trapped in a small room. For this reason, and also for the examiner's safety, leave the door open. Also, this type of patient may feel more relaxed if coffee or juice can be offered.

## **Position Patient**

The patient should be wearing comfortable, loose fitting pajamas or a gown. During the rapport establishing phase of the relationship, the examiner should stay at least three feet away from the patient to avoid invading personal space. As the assessment progresses there will be a need to move closer than three feet, but the personal space should still be maintained when just conversing with the patient.

## **Follow a Systematic Assessment Flow**

Although the patient's condition often dictates what area is covered first in the assessment, one should still observe some type of systematic progression to avoid excluding important assessment areas.

# IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER DURING THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT



## EXPRESS YOUR IDEA

- Why is it important to review the patient's data before doing the assessment?
- Give two different examples on how to build rapport with a young and an adult patient.
- Why is it important to make the patient comfortable and relaxed during the assessment?
- What is the significance in following a systematic assessment flow?