YEAR 1 CLINICAL CONTACT IN PRIMARY CARE SESSION 3

26th NOVEMBER (group A) and 10th December (group B) 2026

Spotlight on core value of Compassion. Professionals and health: caring for carers

Session plan		Morning timings	Afternoon
Introduction	30 min	09.00-09.30	14.00-14.30
Patient contact	1 hour 10	09:30-10.40	14.30-15.40
10-minute break			
Debrief and discussion Skills and NEWS practice (20-30 min)	1hr	10:50 – 11.50	15:50 – 16.50
Close	10 min	11:50 – 12.00	16:50 – 17.00

In this third session, students will meet more patients – both in consultations and interviews. The focus is on compassion, with discussion regarding carers and wellbeing, self-care and resilience for healthcare professionals. Part of the theme "professionals and health" is to identify the importance of doctors and medical students knowing how to look after their own health and wellbeing to be able to care for others. Meeting a carer should give students insight into the needs of carers. Please also allocate 20-30 minutes in the third hour for students to practise some basic clinical skills on each other and consider use of the NEWS score.
Please use this plan in conjunction with the GP teacher guide and other resources on our website. Timings can be flexible, and it doesn't matter if you don't cover everything in the session plan; relevant alternative discussions or activities are fine. Any problems on the day, please email PHC-teaching@bristol.ac.uk or call 0117 455 0031.

Central University teaching context. Student learning in the preceding weeks:

- An EC tutorial on personal well-being and work-life balance. Wheel of wellbeing
- Anatomy of the respiratory tract, nervous system, and physiology of nerve conduction
- Effective consulting lab 3 – focus on consultation skills, creativity. Also covering reflection and paraphrasing, proxemics, patient perspective, sensory acuity, intro to COGConnect.
- Interprofessional learning event

They will all have sat their **first progress test.** This is an MCQ exam sat regularly by all students, set at the level of year 4, for benchmarking and exam practice.

Aim: to meet a further patient/carer and reflect on wellbeing, self-care, and resilience
Objectives. By the end of the session, they will have:

- Introduced themselves and participated in an interview with a patient and/or carer
- Practised verbal and non-verbal skills to help patients explain their personal story
- Communicated in a professional, respectful manner and to maintain patient confidentiality
- Considered compassion within the consultation, towards ourselves and patients/carers
- Considered the role of carers and the challenges they face
- Discussed the importance of self-care and resilience in providing care for others
- Reflected on how to improve and maintain health, wellbeing, and resilience
- Practised basic clinical skills and applied the results using the NEWS score

GP advance preparation

- Read this guide: arrange an appropriate patient to meet with the students (in the surgery or at home), ideally one who is, or has a carer.
- Arrange a short surgery (3/4 patients) for students to observe

Welcome, catch-up and introduction (30 min) 09.00-09.30 or 14.00-14.30

- Welcome and **catch up** – Everyone shares one thing they have done/learned recently. Maybe take a few minutes to tell the students about a recent clinical session or interesting patient
- **Pastoral** – check in, anything for you to be aware of? Offer support and one-to-one discussion if needed
- Review the last session and discuss the **learning objectives, session plan and timings** for this session

Introduce the themes before the patient contact. Focus is on:

- Compassion
- **Caring for carers, including well-being, self-care and resilience for healthcare professionals**

You may wish to:

- Brainstorm the different types of carers. Think about the challenges of needing care and being a carer. *What are the threats to carers' mental and physical health? Consider the GP role in supporting carers. What other services can a GP access on behalf of or signpost carers to?*

Patient contact (1 hr. 10) 09:30-10.40 or 14.30-15.40

- Half the students interview a patient – either a home visit or the patient can attend the surgery.
- The remaining students observe you consulting with 3 or 4 patients
- Alternatively, you may wish to arrange two patients to meet with two groups of students, or half can interview a patient, and half can meet with the carer

You may wish to brief the students on the patients in advance, they can consider what questions they might ask and share the questioning (as the GP teacher need not be present this time).

Whether they are interviewing a patient or observing consultations, the students should all introduce themselves to the patient by name and role.

Ask the students to observe **communication skills,** for feedback and discussion in the debrief.

- *Verbal/non-verbal communication skills which help the patient tell their story/demonstrated listening*
- *Use of open and closed questions, reflection, paraphrasing, signposting and summarising (as these were all practised in their recent EC lab)*
- *How did you encourage the patient to talk? Were there any silences?*
- *Were there any difficult points in the interview and how did you deal with these?*

Please encourage those observing consultations to participate.

While the students are talking to patients and observing consultations, ask them to consider the needs of patients and their carers.

- *What qualities do they think makes a good doctor?*
- *What do they need from their doctors?*
- *Has a doctor helped them understand or cope with their illness or caring role better?*
- *How do they practice self-care? If you met a carer, how do they look after their own health?*
- *Do they have any advice for the students during their training?*

They may wish to revisit previous themes:

- *What do the students think the patient's perspective on their health and wellbeing is?*
- *How many different members of the healthcare team has the patient had interactions with?*
- *How does the GP relationship with a patient affect their experience of being ill?*
- *How important is it to them that a doctor knows them and their medical history?*
- *How important is it for them to be involved about decisions about their care?*

10-minute break

Debrief and discussion, and clinical skills practice(1 hr.) 10:50 – 11.50 or 15:50 – 16.50

Ask one student to summarise the patient's story. **Discuss and reflect** on the patient's narrative and consider the patient or carer's perspective on health and wellbeing.
Reflect on the observation questions above and the **listening skills** and question types that that worked well

Think about **self-care and resilience** for patients and healthcare professionals:

- *How do doctors maintain their own health and wellbeing? What do you do?*
- *What can they do, as a medical student, to maintain their health, wellbeing, and resilience?*
- *In what ways does the GP's job promote their well-being and in what ways does it threaten it?*
- *Some consultations might be stressful for a doctor. Can you think of examples? Why might these be stressful? What can the doctor do to manage those stresses – before/during/after consultations*
- *You may wish to share and discuss the BNSSG wellbeing toolkit with your students*

Spotlight on **compassion**: discussion around carers and caring for carers

- *How can GPs identify carers? You might like to think about the role of the whole practice including patient information on the website or waiting room.*
- *What would happen if a full-time carer had to go into hospital?*
- *Any take home messages from today that will help you look after your own well-being as a student?*

Discuss examples of **collaboration** (session 2) with patients within the patient interview or consultation. For example, in the observed consultations:

- Have the doctor and patient collaborated?
- Do you think the doctor and patient had the same agenda?
- Do you think the patient and doctor had a shared understanding of what was going on?
- What was the doctor's relationship like with that patient?
- How can we support our colleagues in self-care and work with carers?

Clinical skills: ideally 20-30 min - can be at any point in the session
Practice checking pulse, BP, oxygen saturations, temperature and conscious level, and calculating a NEWS score. One student can be the patient, one is the examiner, and others can observe and feedback. Your role is to observe and support them and share your experience of performing these examinations in the primary care setting.
You may wish to start by asking the students to demonstrate what they have already learned in campus and areas they would like to review/practice.
The practical skills section in the GP teacher guide here includes general info, tips and the peer examination policy. As this is the first clinical skills session, some of this info is in the appendix below, with specific details about NEWS score and useful resources.

Close (10 min) 11:50 – 12.00 or 16:50 – 17.00

- **Take home messages** – share something learned/something that surprised them/ a learning goal etc.
- Remind students about their reflective log and ePortfolio
- Discuss what worked well/less well – anything to **stop/start/continue** for future sessions?
- Outline plan and set-up for the next session

GP tasks after the session

- Make own **reflective notes** on the session if you wish (try to keep a record of which students have had the opportunity to consult so others can next time). Prepare for the next session if needed.
- Complete online **attendance data**

Any questions or feedback, contact phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk or lucy.jenkins@bristol.ac.uk

Supporting notes for GP teachers - session 3

You may wish to take a look at the **resources and support services for Bristol students.** https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/wellbeing/
A useful tool to discuss all aspects of wellbeing. http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/media/wheel/index.html Students may have discussed this or completed their own wellbeing wheel for personal use only.

Clinical skills practice
In recent years there has been a significant expansion of our offering of clinical skills sessions in the early years of the programme. Students are taught clinical skills on campus and can then practice in clinical contact in primary or secondary care. This helps to increase integration of their learning by bringing relevant skills to life in the clinical environment.

For each practical skill, the students will have been taught this in a lecture, then attended a skills lab where the examination is demonstrated followed by supervised practice in groups of 4-5. We then ask that you devote 20-30 minutes of the three-hour session to facilitating practice on each other or performing these skills on patients in a consultation if appropriate. We think this may fit well after the patient contact and break, but please feel free to do it whenever it best suits your session. Please note that you are not required to 'teach' the skill, but to provide clinical context and to facilitate peer practice and feedback in a supportive clinical environment.

You can access all the **examination protocols** here.

General guidance for clinical skills teaching (as in the GP Teacher guide). See below for specific info for this FoM 3 session covering clinical skills and NEWS practice.

Before any skills practice, you may wish to

- Ask if any of the students have done this in other roles e.g. HCA, carer etc.
- Discuss the principles of consent – for patients and peers*
- Consider 'preparing' for any examination and the opening/explanation that should accompany the examination.
    - Use COG Connect to guide steps for this.
    - Try running through 'WIIPPPPE' (abbreviated to WIPE).
        - **W** - Wash hands
        - **I** – Introduction self, Identify patient.
        - **P** - Gain Permission. Position, Pain, Privacy
        - **E** - Expose as appropriate

- Consider factors which may make this examination more difficult, such as hearing issues, confusion, pain/distraction, language, relatives/phone, barriers to movement, vision etc.

Regarding a specific skill, you may wish to:

- Ask the students to 'feed-forward' i.e. tell and show you what they learned in the lecture
- Ask when/why this examination would be necessary
- Talk through the examination as a group
- Look at the protocols above or review videos on Geeky medics with students as a reminder for them.

You may wish to organise the students in pairs or threes, where one is the 'patient/examinee' and the other(s)start(s) practising the examination. A third student can observe and give feedback. Your role

is to observe and support them and give feedback. Please also share your experience of performing these examinations in the primary care setting. Afterwards, encourage the students being examined to reflect on what worked well in terms of explanations and for all students to consider any learning needs for further practise.

*Students are aware of the **MBChB protocol on "developing clinical skills by examining each other"** which can be accessed here. This reminds us that this excludes invasive examinations; and should only be done if the examinee has consented to being told should any possible, unknown abnormality be identified – in which case, they should seek advice from their own GP.

Specific info for the FoM 3 clinical skills and NEWS practice

For session 3, skills that the students have learned and should practice: checking pulse, BP, oxygen saturations, temperature and conscious level. Please discuss with them when you use these clinical skills and how findings may influence further investigations and treatment plans.

See here for the students' relevant examination protocols.

The students have bene taught these skills and used these to calculate NEWS scores which are widely used in secondary care to assess and monitor ill patients and guide management and escalation pathways. You may wish to discuss how these scores can be helpful in general practice to assess and refer ill patients. IT can provide a standardised, objective measure of a patient's condition when communicating with ambulance services and hospital staff; to ensure the receiving teams understand the clinical acuity and can prioritise care accordingly. However, NEWS is intended to be used *alongside* a clinician's professional judgement, not as a replacement for it. The RCGP currently views the use of NEWS in general practice as optional, as there is not yet any validated evidence in this specific setting.

Click here for a NEWS to view online or print or see the table below.

National Early Warning Score (NEWS) 2

Physiological parameter	Score 3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Respiration rate (per minute)	≤8		9–11	12–20		21–24	≥25
SpO_2 Scale 1 (%)	≤91	92–93	94–95	≥96			
SpO_2 Scale 2 (%)	≤83	84–85	86–87	88–92 ≥93 on air	93–94 on oxygen	95–96 on oxygen	≥97 on oxygen
Air or oxygen?		Oxygen		Air			
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	≤90	91–100	101–110	111–219			≥220
Pulse (per minute)	≤40		41–50	51–90	91–110	111–130	≥131
Consciousness				Alert			CVPU
Temperature (°C)	≤35.0		35.1–36.0	36.1–38.0	38.1–39.0	≥39.1	

© Royal College of Physicians 2018

Royal College of Physicians

Contingency plans

If your patient cancels and you cannot find a replacement, you could roleplay a patient with students asking the questions.

- You might base this on a patient you know or a recent encounter

- Or you could roleplay the adult carer of their parent with moderate dementia. The carer is presenting with tiredness and problems concentrating, which has been going on for a while, but he/she has not had time to focus on his/her own health.

- Or a parent of a child with significant physical needs who needs help with personal care. The parent has backache and is struggling to fulfil the caring role.

The students will need some basic info and lots of guidance but should be able to give it a go. It is great practice for them, and it will help make the discussion about the themes more real. The discussion and debrief can be as above.

Further scenario to discuss if necessary or time allows
Revise and think about the patient-centred approach from last week in the context of a carer and the patient.
A consultation is booked by the son of a 70-year-old man who has had a stroke and has residual left sided weakness and speech difficulties. His wife is his main carer, helped by their son who is local but also busy as a headteacher. The patient has worsening pain from arthritis in his right 'good' knee and is a bit unsteady as a result. His wife is tired and worried he will fall. The son is concerned about the increasing burden on his mother.
All three of them attend the consultation. Discuss as a group how one can be patient-centred within this consultation – bearing in mind that the patient, wife and son may have differing perspectives. You may wish to refer to I.C.E.I.E as below. This is the acronym the students are taught to help uncover the patient's perspective and agenda. How might the GP explore and manage these differing perceptions?

IDEAS – what does the patient think is going on?
CONCERNS – what is the patient's main concern about their problem?
EXPECTATIONS – what was the patient hoping that you would do today?
IMPACT – what impact is this having on the patient?
EMOTIONS – how does the patient feel about this?

Or a GP practice based scenario: Imagine you are a GP partner or practice manager working in a GP surgery in April 2020. The UK is in 'lockdown' due to the coronavirus pandemic, but the GP surgery is still functioning. How can you encourage and support the wellbeing of your practice team? What about staff who are working from home? Or those who have compromised immune systems?