

Tutorial Suggestions and Expectations

How to Thrive at MGH

I think it's easier to perform at your best when you know what the expectations are. It's hard to write down all the things that you're expected to do, so please don't take this list to be an exhaustive description. The disclaimer is that these are only my thoughts – suggestions of ways to succeed and get the most out of this program.

1. *Know your patient.* I cannot emphasize this point enough. Being thorough with your preoperative assessment can keep you out of trouble or prepare you for troubles you will likely encounter. Do not simply rely on the patient's last PATA (preop) note. It is your job to re-evaluate each patient you anesthetize including re-examining their airway, listening to heart and lungs and performing a focused review of systems. In addition, it is important to review EPIC notes that may not have been seen by the PATA staff. For example, there may be a recent "urgent care" note with a suspected pneumonia or a note from a patient's outside cardiologist with new information. Call the patient at home if you have questions about medical history. **Know your patient.**
2. *Take ownership of your case.* From knowing your room assignment to preparing for, delivering and following up after the perfect anesthetic, you are in the driver's seat of the anesthetic your patients receive. The attendings are here to help, guide, and support you. Come to work each day ready to drive!
3. *Call for help early (and frequent if necessary).* Bottom line is that there is no prize for waiting or troubleshooting on your own. Attendings expect to be paged and are more likely to get upset if they are not. I have never heard of any attending complaining that they were "over-paged" or "over-informed." Delaying calling for help only delays recognition and treatment of the problem and can lead to patient harm.
4. *Listen to your instincts.* If something looks or feels wrong, it probably is. Encountering resistance when placing lines, unusual CO₂ tracings, abnormal lab values or vital signs that don't make sense, may suggest something is not quite right. Don't let things go that don't make sense out of fear of appearing unknowledgeable. Talk to your attendings about what you are thinking.
5. *Technical prowess is not enough to make you an anesthesiologist.* Expertise at placing tubes, gizmos, and getting patients through a case is not enough. You need to be learning the **why** we practice as we do. Reading is essential.
6. *Don't shy away from big cases.* Some people have a natural tendency to shy away from things they are unfamiliar with or that may be challenging. The only way to learn and get the most out of your residency is to jump in.

7. *You are expected to participate in the learning culture of our department.* You can help this culture grow, and the culture will help you grow as well. Residents are expected to contribute and present at case conferences and participate in Board Review. This can be an excellent opportunity to learn more about a clinically important topic, and share your knowledge with the department. The practice in public speaking can be very helpful for your career beyond residency.
8. *You can expect to be asked to make a substantial contribution to at least one of the Departmental Journal Clubs (that doesn't take as long as you think.)* You can expect to make several smaller contributions during Journal Club. Learning to read the literature critically is an important skill. Learning to present an article is a great exercise that can be of great benefit to both you and your colleagues.
9. *You are expected to take the time to give feedback to the attending and the Program when asked.* Please use this as an opportunity to make your program better. You may not be the Program Director (yet), but you can change the people, and the program with what you write.
10. *You have plenty of support!* You will leave tutorial with a Preceptor. You will be paired with a senior resident buddy as well. You have great chief residents, and fantastic Program Directors. All of the senior leadership would be happy to hear from you if you have an issue. You will probably have some bad days during the 36 months of training. Please seek out the support that you need!

Base off original "How to Thrive at MGH" by Brinda Kamdar