



# Student Learning Contracts: When Are They Needed and How Do I Make One?


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## Objectives





- Learner will know when/how to identify a troubled/struggling student
- Learner will be able to confidently report when to initiate a learning contract
- Learner will be able to define a learning contract
- Learner will be able to make a learning contract that is objective and measurable
- Learner will be able to report the steps to be taken after a learning contract is in place



## Identifying



- Behavior Issues
- Learning Issues
- Knowledge Issues
- Hands on Skills

## When to Initiate



- Sooner the better
- When issue is interfering with progress towards midterm or final goals
- When "Red Flag" items are issues
  - Safety (1)
  - Professional Behavior (2)
  - Accountability (3)
  - Communication (4)
  - Clinical Reasoning (7)

(#)= number on the CPI



## So, What Is a Learning Contract?

- A written agreement between a learner/student and teacher/facilitator:
  - The learning objective (knowledge, skills, attitudes)
  - Resources and strategies required to accomplish the objectives
  - Timeline for completion
  - Evidence that the objectives have been accomplished
  - Specific criteria for evaluation
- (Soloman, 1992) (Parseil and Bligh, 1996) (Cross 1996)
- Who makes it?
  - CI and/or Student
  - CCCE/DCE input
- Examples

## Who to Involve

- CI and Student
- CCCE and DCE
- Team/Supportive Approach
  - Not punitive
  - Emphasize seriousness
  - To help everyone succeed (CI and Student)

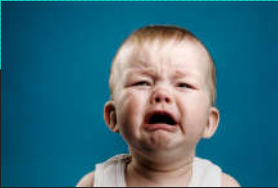



## Groups/Case Studies


- Case #1 Safe Sally
- Case #2 Nervous Nelly
- Case #3 Lazy Lance
- Case #4 Don't Know Donna




## Ok, Now What?



- Learning Contract in Place
- Track progress over time frame
- If no progress, involve CCCE/DCE
  - Observation from CCCE/DCE
- Terminate clinical?/Student resignation (Gallant, MacDonald and Smith Higuchi, 2006)
  - Two different things significantly different outcomes



## Research?



- What is good:
  - Very objective (Solomon, 1992)
  - Improved communication and feedback (Barrington and Street, 2009)
  - Student centered (Gallant, MacDonald and Smith Higuchi, 2006), self-directed learning (Cross, 1996)
  - Provides written evidence of achievement or failure in case of academic appeal (Gallant, MacDonald and Smith Higuchi, 2006)



## Research Continued.....



- What prevents contracts from being used more regularly?
  - External pressures on time (productivity, work/life balance) (Parsell and Bligh, 1996) (Timmins, 2002)
    - Mini contracts—see weekly form
  - Significant help needed from CI to fill out (Bailey and Tuohy, 2009)





## Limitations in Application/Research



- Limitations in research
  - OLD (see dates on reference page)
  - Mostly RN (which is a completely different model of clinical teaching)
    - Found one "physio" article from England when PT was still a BS.
- Many of the articles had clinical contracts as a form of goal setting for all students, only one mentioned it as a remediation effort (Gallant, MacDonald and Smith Higuchi, 2006)



## Questions

## References

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