



Strategies To Translate One's Expertise Into An Effective Consultation

- An effective consultant “informs without patronizing, educates without lecturing, directs without ordering, and ...solves the problem without making the consultee look stupid.”¹
- Always try to “support” the consultee.
- Share one's expertise and insights with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.
- Respect and determine the level of knowledge of the consultee (e.g. Social worker, dietician, nurse, pharmacist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, physician, specialist, AIDS “expert”)
- Additional references at bottom²³
- Understand what the question is since the consultee may not be clearly communicating the question; determine if there is a “question behind the question.”
- Be as brief as needed (e.g. The consultee may be calling between seeing patients). Research indicates that limiting the recommendations to five or less results in improved compliance.
- Be specific and concise; key points can be lost in a mass of less important points. Studies indicate that compliance is improved if recommendations are specific especially for drug recommendations (dose, frequency, route).
- Respect your own limitations. If you are not familiar with the subject area and need to do research, or you would like to get the opinions of your colleagues, it is appropriate to say so. In this situation, give a timeline as to when you will be calling back.

¹ Bates, RC. The two sides of every successful consultation. *Med Econ* 1979;7(56):173-180

² Goldman L, et al. Ten commandments for effective consultations. *Arch Intern Med* 1983;143:1753-1755

³ Sears CL and Charlson ME. The effectiveness of a consultation – compliance with initial recommendations. *Am J Med* 1983;74:870-876