

PREPARING FOR YOUR NP CLINICAL ROTATION



Presented by  NP HUB



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PG.

3	—————	Author's Note
4	—————	How to Use the Guide
6	—————	Background Research
7	—————	Clinical Preparation
8	—————	Tech Apps to Succeed
10	—————	Dress for the Role
12	—————	Best Practices for Clinicals
14	—————	Presenting a Patient
19	—————	Mentorship
21	—————	Leaving Your Resume Etiquette
24	—————	Resume Do's and Don'ts
31	—————	Frequently Asked Questions
33	—————	Conclusion



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Welcome to NPHub's Student Handbook! My name is Dr. Sandra Pagenta, DNP, APN-BC.

I am a Nurse Practitioner with 15 years of clinical nursing experience. I have worked in various fields including Oncology, Neurosurgery, Radiation, Gastroenterology, and Urology. I am also a podcast host, content creator, and speaker.

I have also served as an adjunct professor and preceptor for many years. Looking back on my personal clinical rotations, there were little to no resources available to assist new NP students in adjusting to the expectations of the clinical setting.

I am thrilled to collaborate with NPHub to create this resource for Nurse Practitioner students. We hope these resources enrich your clinical experience and provide opportunities beyond your clinical rotation!



DR. SANDRA PAGENTA,
DNP, APN-BC



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This notebook was designed to help you get the most out of your clinical experience. We hope this serves as a quick reference for you to glean the most from your preceptor, and possibly find a preceptor that can become a mentor/friend.

We have also included information on how to secure future employment at a clinical rotation you may have connected with. Ultimately, we hope you walk away with a positive clinical experience, clear goals on career aspirations, and new skills in your practitioner repertoire!

LET'S REVIEW SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AMAZING STUDENT:

- Passion for the Nurse Practitioner profession & area of specialty
- Seeks out learning opportunities and is eager to get involved
- Networks to find NP mentors
- Prepared with clinical facts and thoughtful questions



PREPARING FOR CLINICALS





BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Research the location of your clinical site and the best route to get there.

You will want to give yourself plenty of time for travel and to familiarize yourself with the area, especially if you are not local.

Check out the local restaurants (you can never be too prepared for lunch!) and general area surrounding the clinic.

Bonus points if you do a test drive before the big day!

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Who does the clinic serve? Children/Adults?
- Is it a specialized or general practice?
- Do they offer special services?

LOOK UP YOUR PRECEPTOR:

- What are their credentials?
- Any recognition, awards, or achievements?
- Are they involved in any community groups?

To be ahead of the game and impress my clinical instructor, I would prepare for my clinical site in advance using these tips. I got offered multiple jobs because of this!



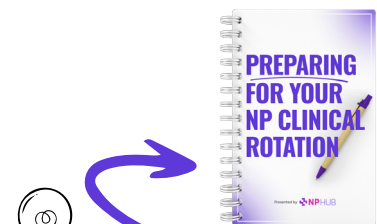
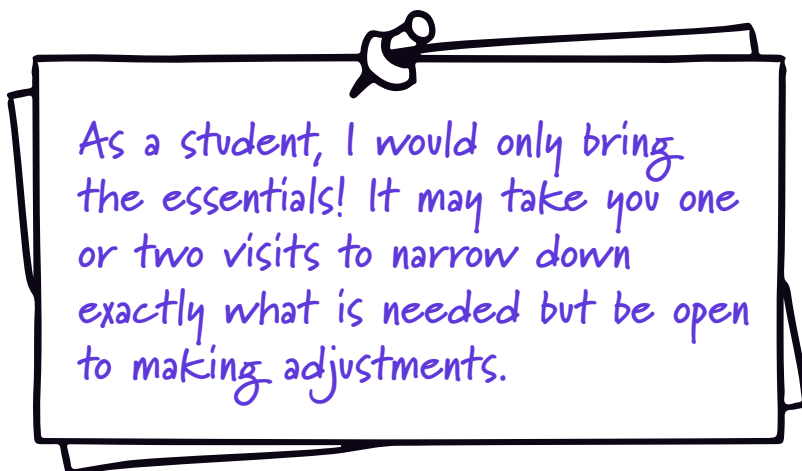
CLINICAL PREPARATION

Must have!

- Snacks (portable, easy storage)
- Pocket-sized notepad with pen
- Cellphone
- Clipboard
- Flashcards

When engaging in a new clinical site, we recommend preparing in advance regarding related material, like disease processes, diagnoses, clinical manifestations, testing, and treatment plans.

The notebooks provided by NPHub are meant to act as tools to prepare and guide you in the corresponding clinical rotation.



Bring your NPHub notebooks to the clinical setting for a quick reference!



TECH APPS TO SUCCEED



MEDSCAPE

Medical news and expert commentary by specialty, as well as drug & disease information. CME/CE activities available.



LEXICOMP

Evidence-based drug referential solutions to inform smart, safe medication decisions.



VISUAL DX

Visual reference tool that aids therapeutic decisions and improves patient safety. CME/CE activities available.



UPTODATE

Evidence-based clinical decision support that is clear, actionable, and rich with real-world insights.



PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Assists primary care clinicians identify the appropriate screening, counseling, & preventive medication services. Based on recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), you can search by age, gender, and other selected factors.



EOCRATES

Pharmacology reference that has expanded to include medical reference materials. From medical calculators to adult and pediatric reference tables, it spans a large variety of clinical decision support tools.



DRESS FOR THE ROLE



Professional work attire such as business casual, or scrubs if approved.



Think of each day as a job interview.



Conservative makeup and well-groomed hair.



Bring a sweater or jacket and wear comfortable shoes.

PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST CLINICAL DAY, EMAIL YOUR PRECEPTOR AND ASK:

- Where is the best place to park? Parking decal requirements?
- Any specific expectations before the first day?
- What is the appropriate attire?
- Will you have your own login or observe how they document?
- What are the average number of patients seen per day?



Most questions are answered in the NPHub Preceptor Profile. For any additional needs, reach out to your Recruitment Coordinator.



BEST



PRACTICES TO

HELP DURING

CLINICALS



PROFESSIONALISM

Arrive early: This shows an eagerness and dedication to your clinical experience.

Confirm your schedule with your preceptor and stick to it.

Dress business casual or in scrubs: Ask yourself "Would I hire someone wearing this?"

Cultivate an interest in learning new things.

Familiarize yourself with procedural steps and equipment by being proactive to touch everything in the office you will use in practice.

Closely observe your preceptor and learn to anticipate their next move.



At the conclusion of your rotation, leave a well-written thank you note for the clinic and your preceptor.





PRACTICING A NEW ROLE

Critical thinking and communication are the foundation of the NP role.

Critical thinking is the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.

Exhibit critical thinking by asking the appropriate questions based on your existing knowledge of the material being reviewed. This allows the preceptor to fill in any knowledge gaps.

A working knowledge of a given specialty allows you think ahead for patient outcomes, any exams/procedures you might need to order, and what follow-up is needed.

Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information or news.

Be honest with your preceptor regarding knowledge gaps. This fosters an environment of learning and building trust.

Don't be afraid to ask questions! Preceptors love students that are interested in the material and eager to learn.

Communication with the patient is a learned technique!



Don't just be an observer! Get in there and do the work! When you show a high degree of initiative, it leaves a lasting impression.





PRESENTING A PATIENT CASE

You can gain valuable knowledge from presenting your patient to your preceptor. It gives the preceptor an opportunity to help you formulate a patient's assessment and plan.



Begin with the patient's name, age, sex, presenting concerns, list of medical diagnoses, current medication, and new lab results pertinent to concerns.

Example:

Ms. Jonas is a 58-year-old female here for new onset of chest palpitations. She has a history of HTN, HLD, DM and Hypothyroidism.

She takes Metformin 500 mg BID, Atorvastatin 20 mg daily, and Levothyroxine 100 mcg daily. Her labs from 3 months ago showed: HGB A1c of 7.1, TSH at 2.8, normal lipid panel, CBC and CMP.





Concern #1:

History of present illness, relevant physical exam findings, treatment plan, and then ask questions of your preceptor



Concern #2:

Repeat any other concerns as time allows. Ask relevant questions



Example:

Chest palpitations: Started 2 months ago, occurs while at rest, once a week, lasting a few seconds at a time. No other concerning symptoms such as chest pain, tingling in her arms/neck, SOB, dizziness or syncope. Heart rate and rhythm normal at 88, no murmurs, rubs or gallops on exam, and her 12 lead-EKG is normal sinus rhythm.

Due to her hypothyroidism, her Levothyroxine may not be therapeutic and may be causing her symptoms. I would like to recheck her TSH level. **Is there anything I could be missing or other explanation for her symptoms?**

Example:

Hypothyroidism: Dx over 1 year ago, her levothyroxine dose was increased from 75 mcg to 100 mcg at her last visit. Her exam showed warm, dry, intact skin, and her thyroid is not palpable.

I want to recheck her TSH to see if this recent dose increase was too much for her. **Anything else I should check?**



Develop a follow up plan

Example:

Other concerns: We did not have time to talk about her diabetes at today's visit, will address at next visit in 4 weeks and order HGBA1C prior to visit to discuss.

Plan: Can refer to cardiology if chest palpitations continue and refer to endocrinology if symptoms persist.

Congrats on presenting your patient!



One of the best investments of your time as an NP student is to learn to take a thorough history. A majority of the patient care plan comes from the patient's history. Understand what areas you feel deficient in so that you can ask appropriate questions and fill those gaps.



I remember the struggle in my clinicals presenting to a preceptor. I would get so nervous, palms sweating and stumble all over myself when speaking. Remember we were all new at this at one time, and you are practicing. Give yourself grace but do not stop practicing. The only way you get better is through more PRACTICE, and feedback.



PLAYING WITH NEW BALANCE

- ✓ Learning how to balance classes, homework, and 500-600 hours of clinical work is a job in and of itself. **Compound these priorities with family, career, and self-care** and the mission begins to feel impossible. Take heart. You've got this!
- ✓ **Discover the secrets to success from those who've mastered it**—current NP students and seasoned NPs. Learn their top strategies for juggling responsibilities and their essential tools for impeccable time management. From leveraging digital calendars to smart planning, get practical advice on realistic time allocation that you can implement today.

After each clinical day **takes time to reflect on what was learned** - the diagnosis, medications, tests ordered, and referrals placed.

- ✓ Use your preceptor packet and notebook to jot down notes. This can be a “cheat sheet” to utilize in real-life practice.



Prioritize self-care with the same discipline as your studies. *Incorporate daily practices such as mindfulness meditation, regular physical activity, or journaling to effectively manage stress. These proactive steps are vital not just for preventing burnout, but for preserving your well-being and enabling you to deliver the highest quality care.*



PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STEP

- ✓ **Feedback is a gift.** At the end of the clinical experience, your preceptor should provide you with input on how the clinical time went and ways that you could improve. This feedback is very important to your growth as an NP.
- ✓ **Preceptors are opportunities for you to find mentors.** Mentors help guide you through the steps of being an effective NP. Evaluating your preceptor's strengths will help you grow in those areas you might be weaker in.



Your Network is your net worth. Networking is a tool you need to use throughout your whole career. Start now.





MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is a valuable relationship in which a more knowledgeable person nurtures the professional development or growth of another, outside the normal manager/employee line management.

Why?
↓

A good mentor will lead you through the initial steps of becoming an effective NP. A great preceptor can help you discover other great mentors.

They can assist with networking, as well as clinical and professional questions. You may also discover mentorship in the community outside of your clinical setting.

Who?
↓

Choosing a mentor requires first acknowledging where you need guidance. For example, if you struggle at interpreting ECG, the Cardiology NP whom you met at the recent conference could become that mentor you need.

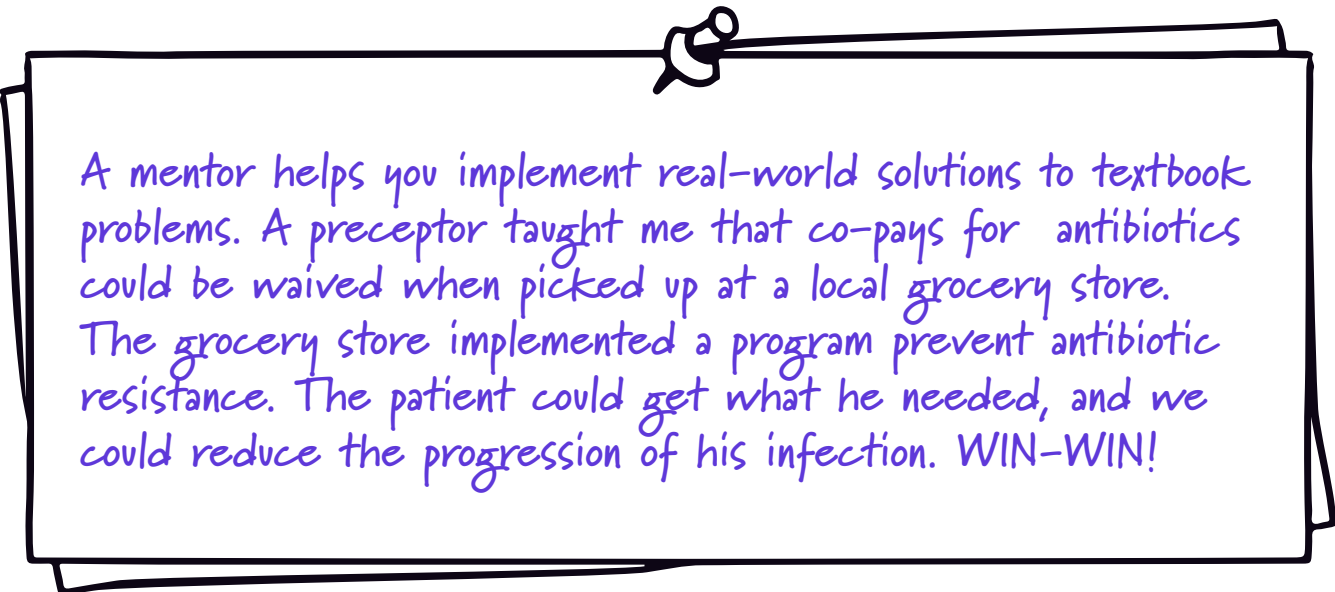
Consider an NP who may not live locally but is available by phone or email. Having more than one mentor is also a good way to observe different perspectives. Don't limit yourself to just one specialty, clinical experience, or patient.



How?
↓

Networking at nursing conferences, and professional organization meetings is a way to meet potential mentors.

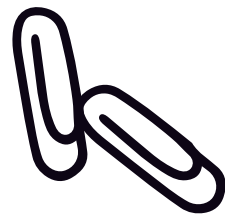
Stay in touch with faculty, and other classmates as they can also serve as mentors. If there aren't any options where you live, start your own NP group!



A mentor helps you implement real-world solutions to textbook problems. A preceptor taught me that co-pays for antibiotics could be waived when picked up at a local grocery store. The grocery store implemented a program prevent antibiotic resistance. The patient could get what he needed, and we could reduce the progression of his infection. WIN-WIN!



AFTER CLINICAL ROTATION ETIQUETTE





TIPS FOR LEAVING YOUR RESUME AT YOUR CLINICAL SITE

😊 WHO RECEIVES YOUR RESUME MATTERS

Evidence-based clinical decision support that is clear, actionable, and rich with real-world insights.

😞 SAY YOU HEAR 'WE ARE NOT HIRING.' THAT DOESN'T MEAN 'GIVE UP'

The clinics and/or hospitals in your area may not be hiring nurse practitioners at the moment. However, this doesn't mean they won't be in the near future. When you drop off your resume, the NP or HR person may let you know they don't have any open positions. Ask to leave your resume regardless and ask to speak to the hiring manager/physician. This way, when a position does open up, you will be the first in line for the formal interview process.

← EXPECT PUSHBACK

If you get a soft 'no', or redirection in response to your resume drop-off attempt, your efforts may still be effective. Thank the person you are speaking with for instructing you as to how to apply for the opportunity. Ask if they would still be willing to pass along a hard



copy of your resume to the person in charge of hiring for the position so they know of your in-person efforts.

→ FOLLOW-UP

Follow up the in-person visit with a professionally written email saying something along the lines of “Great to meet you, have you had a chance to review my resume?” one week after your visit. This reminds employers to open that envelope you dropped off in case it has been lost in the shuffle.

⊘ ANTICIPATE REJECTION

Dropping off your resume in person won't always be well received. If you receive a firm 'no', push your shoulders back, and thank the person whom you are speaking with for their time and direction as to how to apply for the opportunity. Smile and move on. Employers in tough nurse practitioner job markets may be inundated with resumes. Or your timing may simply be bad. Being pushy won't benefit your efforts.



“If it comes, let it come. If it stays, let it stay. If it goes, let it go.” – Nicholas Sparks

Having this attitude about rejection protects your mental health and keeps you optimistic in future pursuits. Work hard ,but keep perspective.



RESUME DO'S AND DON'TS

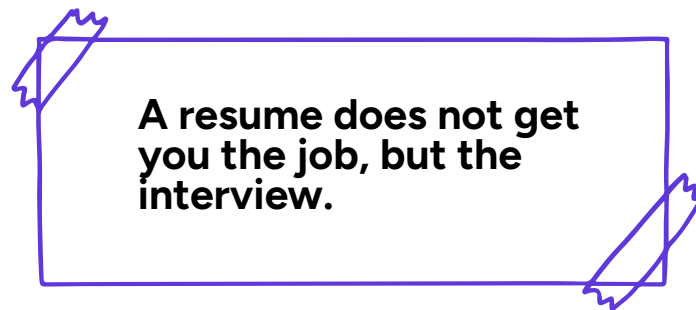




RESUME WRITING GUIDE

A resume is a marketing tool, and one of the best ways to present your skills, knowledge, and experience to a potential employer.

The average employer spends 15-20 seconds to review a resume. Ensure that yours is targeted, error free and easy to skim.



TIPS FOR WRITING A RESUME

- ✓ **Keep it 1-2 pages in length**, depending on your experience
- ✓ **Be consistent** with indentation, capitalization, punctuation, font style, font size, and spacing
- ✓ **Avoid clutter, and minimize text to key information.** Highlight experiences and transferable skills most relevant to the position
- ✓ **Avoid pronouns**
- ✓ **Proofread**

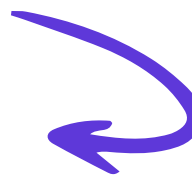


- ✓ **Highlight accomplishments** using action verbs, quantities, qualities, and details to describe not only what you did but also how you did it

Include:

- Header - name, home address, and number, use professional email
- Resume Intro - Career Objective, 2-3 sentence statement with an overview of skills, experience, and professional goals. Best for entry-level professionals
- Education- List all degrees and study abroad experience, GPA if above 3.2, and research/special projects
- Clinical Rotation- see next box

CLINICAL ROTATION/WORK EXPERIENCE



- ✓ **As a new APRN:** Prioritize your clinical experiences by listing each rotation, including only relevant rotations to the position you are applying

Ex: Setting: Geriatric

Location: Gainesville Nursing Center Semester/Hours:

Summer 2015/440 hours

- ✓ **Work Experience:** Anything you are doing in and outside of the healthcare field. Include employer name, city, state, job title, and dates of employment

- Show the results of your work and how you helped the organization. Use action verbs
- Highlight transferable skills (ie teamwork, leadership) and be creative here (volunteering and presentations)



RESUME WRITING GUIDE CONT.

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

This includes but is not limited to:

- Technical Skills: Computer applications, languages
- Foundational Skills Sets: Ex: Develop treatment plans
- Languages: Proficiency terms (native/conversational)
- Affiliations: Professional Organizations (AANP)
- Volunteer: Recent and relevant activities
- Certifications: List the most recent and relevant

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Bullet points under each job position should tell a mini-story. This should describe what you did, why you did it, and what happened because of your actions.

- **Quantify Results** - As often as possible use statistics, percentages, and numbers to demonstrate the scope of your accomplishments.
- **Qualify Results** - When not quantifiable, use a qualitative outcome.



Questions to ask yourself:

- ① Did your work have a positive impact on the organization? If so, how?
- ② Did you identify problems or challenges?
- ③ Did you reduce cost, wasted time, or effort?
- ④ Did you train, coach, or mentor team members, patients, or families?

ACTION VERBS

Advised	Graded	Led	Reduced
Anticipated	Identified	Lectured	Shared
Briefed	Inspected	Mapped	Strategized
Caclulated	Increased	Maintained	Synchronized
Clafified	Improved	Motivated	Streamlined
Debated	Inititated	Negotiated	Systemized
Defined	Invented	Promoted	Substituted
Detected	Guaranteed	Prescribed	Tabulated
Diagnosed	Guided	Programmed	Worked
Figured	Helped	Read	



You can leave a resume with & without a picture.

SALLY DOGOOD

NURSE PRACTITIONER STUDENT



Sallydogood@hotmail.com



linkedin profile: Sally DoGood



123-456-7890



Participating in Good Hope Medical clinical practice from September 2022-December 2022. Worked with preceptor APRN Tina Chapman. During this rotation: counseled diabetic patients on their glucose meters explained how continuous glucose monitoring worked, and how to best manage diabetes care. Improved multiple patients' HGBA1C by 10-15% on average. Learned how to manage an expected patient load and complex patient issues during this rotation.

EDUCATION

**Master of Science in Nursing
Adult Geriatrics**
San Dias University
Expected in 2023

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
San Dias University
2015-2019

SKILLS

PROFESSIONAL

Patient Load Time management
Complex Disease Problem solving
Bilingual Spanish Speaker
Creativity
Leadership
Quick learner

AFFILIATES

Member of AANP since 2021

EXPERIENCE

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NURSE

Really Great Hospital | 2023

- Tasked with Charge Nurse Leadership
- Owl Wound Care Nurse Certified. Implemented floor initiative to reduce bed sores which reduced hospital-acquired ulcers by 15%. Presented research at AANP.
- Managed complex patient load, and multiple medical problems.
- Coordinated COPD Exacerbation Team for frequent flyers and reduced rate of admission by 10% every year.

ONCOLOGY NURSE

Really Great Hospital | 2020

- Took care of complex cancer disease processes
- Chemo-certified RN- administered and counseled patients on chemotherapy
- Organized task force to prevent falls for patients who recently became neutropenic. Brought a 50% reduction in falls on our floor. This system then became recognized by top Hospital Administrators and implemented hospital-wide.
- Mentored 15 new nurses during their orientation, Expedited their orientation to the floor by 1 week by providing consistent input with a learning tool developed by Nurse Innovation Team.



SALLY NOGOOD

STUDENT

Not a professional email

Add LinkedIn

Dont use proper names

Choose a professional photo

sallyhotmomma123@hotmail.com

123-456-7890



Participating in your clinical practice in the fall. Worked with APRN Tina. I counseled diabetic patients on their glucose meters, explained how continuous glucose monitoring worked, and managed their diabetes care. I helped multiple patients lower their HGBA1C. I learned how to manage a patient load and complex patient issues during this rotation.

Do not abbreviate 'Geri'

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Nursing
Adult Geri
San Dias University
Expected in 2023
GPA 2.5
Bachelor of Science in Nursing
San Dias University

Only GPA above 3.2

Include dates

EXPERIENCE

ED NURSE

Do not abbreviate 'ED'

Really Great Hospital | 2023

- Charge Nurse
- Owl Wound Care Nurse
- Managed complex patient load, and multiple medical problems.
- Coordinated COPD exacerbation team for frequent flyers

SKILLS

PROFESSIONAL

- Time management
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Quick learner
- Leadership

ONCOLOGY NURSE

Really Great Hospital | 2020

- Took care of complex cancer disease processes
- Chemo-certified RN- administered and counseled patients on chemotherapy
- Organized task force to prevent falls for patients who recently became neutropenic. Brought about a reduction of falls on our floor. This system then became implemented hospital-wide.

Fix typos

Use specific, measurable units (%)

Tell a story, "Task Force results became recognized by top hospital administrators"



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

① HOW DO I ASK MY PRECEPTOR TO BE MY MENTOR AFTER MY ROTATION?

First, schedule a meeting to discuss mentoring opportunities with the potential mentor. Make sure you have thought out what you are needing from the mentor. Then ask for exactly what you need from a relationship from them.

① WHAT DO I PUT IN THE THANK YOU NOTE TO MY PRECEPTOR?

Use a formal tone, make sure to address a specific individual, say thank you, and give examples of what you are thankful for, sign each note, and give one to each individual that helped your clinical experience go well.

① SHOULD I GET MY PRECEPTOR A GIFT AFTER CLINICALS?

A thank you is completely acceptable, see answer above. If you want to show appreciation, bring something that the whole staff can enjoy. Donuts are always a big win.



① WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO ASK FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION?

Always ask in person first. Once they agree, send a formal letter of recommendation request. Be sure to follow up before the due date. And thank the preceptor for writing the recommendation.

① WHAT ARE THE BEST WAY TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH MY PRECEPTORS AFTER CLINICALS?

Start by being a likable student. Be on time, show initiative towards the work, ask good questions, and be professional and helpful. Afterward, ask for their email to stay in touch. If the clinical rotation went well, most providers won't mind staying in touch.

① THIS IS MY FIRST CLINICAL AND I'M OVERWHELMED, WHAT DO I DO WITHOUT COMING ACROSS AS UNPREPARED?

So normal! The goal of clinicals is to become a proficient nurse practitioner which means your preceptor and you will need to put in the time and effort to identify how to help you grow. Stay open, and humble, and ask lots of questions. You will eventually master the role with hard work.



CONCLUSION



I hope this workbook helped jump-start your clinical experience. I cannot wait to hear how well you are doing in your clinical setting with this additional knowledge.

The most productive action you can take for your career is to start with the end in mind. Start thinking now about what you want your career to look like.

Ponder on what kind of life you want and what career aspiration or position fits best into that lifestyle. I wish you the very best in everything you set your mind to!

Thanks for letting NPttub be a part of your clinical experience!

You've got this!

DR. SANDRA PAGENTA,
DNP, APN-BC



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