Jane, can you sign me in?

A scenario based discussion of some key professionalism issues as raised in the:

‘Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students’

General Medical Council
Aims of the session

1. To develop an understanding of why professionalism is important in medicine

2. To develop a critical approach to key issues surrounding professionalism

3. To understand what the role of the GMC is in ensuring good medical practice
Why is professionalism important in medicine?

- The care of the patient is the doctor's main priority.
- To ensure the privacy and dignity of the patient is respected.
- Ensures doctors' skills and knowledge remain up-to-date, and that they are clinically competent.
- To maintain trust between the patient and the doctor.
- To ensure that the patient receives excellent medical care.
- To ensure transparency, and that doctors take responsibility for their actions and decisions.
Rank the following options:

1. Failing to attend clinical placements on a regular basis
2. Being rude to patients and colleagues
3. Poor time management
4. Unwillingness to learn from constructive feedback given by colleagues
5. Being disruptive in teaching sessions

Try to justify your answers.
Discuss the following points:

a) What professional issues does this Facebook conversation raise?

b) How else could the medical student have dealt with this challenging and emotionally provocative situation?

c) What steps can medical students make in order to protect themselves online? (e.g. on Facebook, Twitter etc)
Discuss the following points:

a) What professional issues does this Twitter post raise?

b) How else could the medical student have dealt with their obvious frustration?

c) What would you do if you saw one of your colleagues post this online?
Discuss the following points:

a) What professional issues does this conversation raise?

b) How would you respond to this message from James?

c) What are your opinions regarding medical students taking drugs?
Discuss the following points:

a) What professional issues does this conversation raise?

b) How would you deal with one of your peers asking you to sign them into a taught teaching session?

c) What would you do in response to your peer telling you that she intends to cheat / plagiarise on her E-portfolio?
Discuss the following points:

a) What professional issues does this Facebook status raise?

b) Imagine you were David. How would you deal with this?

c) Briefly explain how social media can be used positively within medical school
Fitness to practice processes

• The GMC is responsible for the quality assurance of all medical education in the UK

• Medical schools have ways to monitor behaviour and have a fitness to practise process to deal with students who display unprofessional behaviour

• Low level concerns will often be monitored and dealt with internally

• Extra support can be given to students who require it

• More serious issues may require a formal fitness to practise investigation which may result in significant sanctions such as exclusion from the medical course

• During fitness to practice investigations / hearings, support will be given by your medical school. In addition to this, external organisations (e.g. BMA) or medical defence organisations (e.g. MPS) can provide support
Conclusions

1) Professionalism is vital in maintaining the trust our patients have in the medical profession

2) Make yourself aware of the guidance produced by the GMC as this is an invaluable source of clear, concise and easily-accessible information

3) Doctors and doctors in training are in an extremely privileged position. Do not abuse it
Resources to be taken away

1) Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students – GMC – Vital document for all medical students to read

2) Medical students online – A short guide about how to keep out of trouble when using social media. This guide has been written by a current medical student implementing some key messages from GMC guidance

Recommended reading

1) Professional behaviour and fitness to practice: guidance for medical schools and their students – GMC – Vital document for all medical students to read

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