



# ShadowMatch 111

## Shadowing Protocols

Shadowing is a privileged experience. Its purpose is to introduce you to physician assistant practice in either a clinical or hospital setting. If you think you want to be a PA or you're simply curious about the profession, shadowing is an up-close-and-personal view of the work PAs do.

Each practitioner and venue may present its own set of shadowing protocols for you to follow. What we present here are general recommendations and guidelines to review prior to your initial visit.

Along with *ShadowMatch 111*, shadowing opportunities may come to you from allied medical care providers, physicians, physician assistants, PA programs, family and friends. If they do, take advantage of them and know that ShadowMatch 111 will assist you coordinated all your shadowing experiences.

### Family Practice Vs. Specialty

If possible, start with family medicine. The scope of practice offers a broader variety of patients and medical care. Later, on, add visits to specialty practices as well.

### Knowing Something About the Practice You Will Visit

Who is the supervising physician? Who is the PA you will be shadowing? What is the patient population; ethnicity, cultural

issues, socio-economic issues? *ShadowMatch 111* will assist you in all of this.

### Appearance

Each medical setting may require different dress code preferences. In some rural clinics jeans, t-shirts and tennis shoes may be acceptable dress. In hospitals, scrubs may be in order. In other venues jackets, slacks, shirts, blouses and skirts may be required.

### The On-Site Experience

Show up 10 minutes early. Be prepared for parking issues. Turn your cell phone off; no texting. Be prepared to talk about yourself. You may be asked...

Why are you interested in the PA profession?

Have you applied to any PA programs?

Questions about your past medical experience.

Questions about your personal history.

What do you hope to get out of this experience?

Be personable and cheerful. People want to feel comfortable with you. And if there is an opportunity to meet the supervising physician, take it. Good contacts can serve you well while planning your career choices.

**GOOD IMPRESSIONS LAST  
BAD IMPRESSIONS LAST LONGER**

Most important, follow all protocols required by the office staff and the PA. Be courteous to everyone.

## The Patient

Observing the interactions between patients and the PA is your purpose for being there. The PA will ask the patient for permission to have you in the examining room. On occasion, expect to be refused. Some patients have personal issues they might not feel comfortable discussing with a stranger present.

The PA will introduce you to the patient. If you are asked to introduce yourself, state your name and explain why you are shadowing the PA today.

Your role is the observer. When in the examining room, unless the PA has granted you permission to do otherwise:

- Do not offer opinions

- Do not take notes

- Do not ask questions

- Do not make physical contact with the patient.

The time to ask questions is when the patient visit is over and you are alone with the PA. Patient confidentiality and comfort are paramount when non-medical visitors are present. The office will require you to sign a HIPPA release form prior to your seeing patients with the PA.

## The Follow Up

The follow up is an essential component of the shadowing experience. It serves two purposes; to say thank you and to be remembered.

Avoid email. A written letter is more personal and the extra effort will be appreciated.

Do not ask for a letter of recommendation. Unless you have an extended relationship with the PA you are shadowing, such a request after a one half day encounter may put the PA in the awkward position of having to refuse.

Keep the PA updated on your progress toward getting into a PA program. *ShadowMatch 111* will help keep you in touch with the PAs you have shadowed.

Good luck and best wishes for a happy, successful future in our profession.

The *ShadowMatch 111* Team

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