

Cultivating a Growth Mindset in Learners

As educators, you are tasked with more than just passing on medical knowledge - you also work to develop learners' confidence. One way to do this is to help your students approach learning through a growth mindset. This involves helping the learner understand that intelligence, character, and ability can be developed through challenges. Confident learners with growth mindsets share ideas with peers, ask questions, and reach conclusions independently, rather than just accepting answers or diagnoses from others. You can help a learner to cultivate a growth mindset in several ways.

Encourage your learners to:

Try Something New

- Remind the learner that medicine is an ever-changing field; knowing everything in every circumstance is unrealistic.

Learn From Mistakes

- Share how you have learned from your own mistakes.
- Don't just listen; explore a learner's feelings as to what is causing any concerns.

Recall Past Successes

- Promote paced change and growth.
- Have the learner create a list of successful achievements. Review periodically, especially in trying times.

Accept Feedback

- Emphasize a partnership between you and the learner.
- Provide regular, constructive feedback. Point out that confidence is not built by continually being showered with praise.

References:

James K, Nightingale C. Self-esteem, confidence and adult learning. National Institute of Adult Continuing Education; 2005.
Newman P, Peile E. Valuing learners' experience and supporting further growth: educational models to help experienced adult learners in medicine. *BMJ* 2002;325:200