

Ideas for SIGN Chapter Activities

This list is a compilation of some activities for your chapter. Feel free to choose the ideas that work for your chapter. If you have suggestions for unique group activities, please send them to AACAP to be added to this list to share with other chapters.

Speakers

Invite professors, psychiatrists in private practice, attendings and residents to speak to SIGN members.

Topics:

1. Psychiatry Overview
2. Lifestyle Issues: Why Become a Psychiatrist? or Life of a Psychiatry Resident
3. Subspecialties: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry, etc.
4. Different Practices: Urban, Rural, Teaching Hospital, Private Practice, etc.
5. Specific Groups: Residents, Women in Psychiatry, Minorities in Psychiatry, etc.
6. Case Presentations: ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Depression.
7. Hands-On Skills Workshops: Psychiatric Evaluation, MRI, etc.
8. Create Interdisciplinary Expert Panels: Joint efforts between Psychiatry and Neurology or Pediatrics, other specialties and subspecialties, using residents and faculty
9. Seminars on managing finances, the application process, interviewing, choosing a residency, fellowships, running a practice, research, technology (PDAs, etc.), time management or stress management

Hints:

Make sure speakers are enthusiastic and entertaining.

Encourage student participation whenever possible.

Videos keep presentations interesting.

Pizza always helps attract students to talks.

Don't schedule near exam times.

Advertise in as many ways as possible.

Call all participants the night before the presentations to remind them about topics, places and times.

Write thank you letters to the speakers.

Keep lists of good speakers for future reference. Involve residents, fellows and faculty, as well as outside volunteers.

Keep costs low by such methods as co-sponsoring talks.

Mentorships

Match students with an attending or resident mentor to shadow during the first and second years of medical school.

Hints:

Host a luncheon or reception for each psychiatry rotation group to introduce them to SIGN

Match students up with mentors in their area of interest whenever possible.
Contact your regional organization of the AACAP or the APA (contact information on the AACAP website)

Make sure mentor is enthusiastic and accessible.

Encourage students to attend grand rounds.

Allow students to organize their own schedules.

Let the student decide if he or she will come into the hospital weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.

Over or under scheduling time commitment will lead to disinterest.

Encourage students to clearly define a schedule. This increases the likelihood of continued involvement.

Write thank you letters to all mentors.

Keep lists of good mentors for future reference.

Schedule a "Dinner with the Professors" or a dinner with the regional AACAP members to acquaint students with child and adolescent psychiatrists.

Invite students to Department social events.

Invite students to dinner meetings sponsored by regional AACAP organizations.

Field Trips

1. Visit different practice settings: clinic, private practice, etc. Arrange for patient interactions.
2. Tour a research facility or medical library
3. Visit museums and find psychiatry in art and sculpture
4. Attend movies/theater on psychiatry-related topics for discussion
5. Introduce psychiatry to children in K-12 in your community
6. Arrange joint activities with a nearby SIGN chapter.

Assemble Research and Employment Opportunities Lists

1. Identify research positions and internships in psychiatry for which SIGN members may apply.
2. Apply for the SIGN Summer Research Scholarship.

Sponsor an Orientation Fair Booth for New Students or Career Day Activities

Journal Club

Ask the advisor to supervise a journal club for SIGN members.

Hints:

Use broadly based review articles.

Make sure to meet at convenient times.

Supply food if possible.

See if participants can receive elective credit.

Load articles on chapter website.