

The Plan (SOAP Note)

Obj. 7.9: Develop a plan to attain health goals for a patient that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.



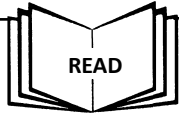
Medical Error & Malpractice

Medical clinicians (primarily physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants) are held accountable for consistently making correct, evidence-based decisions about the diagnosis and treatment of disease for their patients. When they make serious errors, they are often sued for malpractice. **Why do you think the rates of medical error and malpractice are becoming commonplace in today's medical system?**



The Complexity of Medicine Today

According to Atul Gawande in his book, "The Checklist Manifesto," the ninth edition of the WHO's international classification of diseases has grown to distinguish more than 13,000 different diseases, syndromes, and types of injury.... Clinicians now have at their disposal some 6,000 drugs and 4,000 medical and surgical procedures, each with different requirements, risks, and considerations." **What impact do you think this explosion of possible diseases and treatments has clinicians and the quality of care they can provide?**



The SOAP Note Plan

The “Plan” is what the health care provider will do to treat the patient's concerns - such as ordering further labs, radiological work up, referrals given, procedures performed, medications given and education provided. This should address each item of the differential diagnosis. A note of what was discussed or advised with the patient as well as timings for further review or follow-up are generally included.

A very rough example follows for a patient being reviewed following an appendectomy (removal of the appendix, a small pouch attached to the large intestine). Note: This example resembles a surgical SOAP note; medical notes tend to be more detailed, especially in the subjective and objective sections.

Surgery Service, Dr. Jones

S: No further Chest Pain or Shortness of Breath. "Feeling better today." Patient reports **headache**.

O: Afebrile, P 84, R 16, BP 130/82. No acute distress.

Neck no JVD, Lungs clear

Cor RRR

Abd Bowel sounds present, mild RLQ tenderness, less than yesterday. Wounds look clean.

Ext without edema

A: Patient is a 37 year old man on post-operative day 2 for **laparoscopic appendectomy**.

P: Recovering well. Advance diet. Continue to monitor labs. Follow-up with Cardiology within three days of discharge for stress testing as an out-patient. Prepare for discharge home tomorrow morning.

The plan itself includes various components:

- Diagnostic component - continue to monitor labs
- Therapeutic component - advance diet
- Referrals - Follow up with Cardiology within three days of discharge for stress testing as an out-patient.
- Patient education component - that is progressing well
- Disposition component - discharge to home in the morning

Source: Wikipedia, “SOAP Note” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SOAP_note#Plan)



A Comprehensive Plan

1. Review the Plan in the note above. Would you consider it comprehensive, meaning that it covers all aspects of the patient’s care that should be addressed? Why or why not?

2. How would you improve the Plan? (*Consider mental, social and physical health; short-term vs. long-term care, any medication, procedures, or follow-up care; communication and education for the patient, etc.*)


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Creating A Comprehensive Plan

When clinicians create a plan it should address all of the components that will help the patient recover, prevent illness or injury in the future, and ultimately lead a healthier life. Some important components to consider as a part of the Plan are listed below. The examples listed are for a patient who has recently been diagnosed with HIV. Read through all of the questions a clinician should consider in this scenario.

Patient's strengths: What strengths does the patient have that can be encouraged and capitalized upon to improve health? For example, is the patient in good physical shape or eating a healthy diet? Has the patient demonstrated engagement in the medical process by researching the disease on the Internet?

Patient's needs: What deficits or challenges does the patient have that must be addressed? For example, is the patient obese? Does the patient distrust health care providers? Is the patient unable to read or have very low literacy level?

Patient's risk factors: What unique factors place this patient at risk? For example, does this patient use injectable drugs? Does the patient have multiple sex partners? Is the patient homeless?

Mental health: What mental health supports will the patient need? For example, a support group, a counselor or social worker, etc.

Social health: What social supports does the patient require? Will disclosure of HIV status impact relationships with significant others? Family? Friends?

Physical health: What behaviors does the patient need to engage in to keep healthy? For example, does the patient need to sleep more, exercise or eat healthier? Do they need a system for remembering their medications?

Short-term: What immediate symptoms or progression of the disease should the patient expect? How should treatment go for the next few days? Weeks? Months?

Long-term: What is the long-term prognosis of the disease? What symptom or effects on life can the patient expect months from now? Years from now?

Medication: What medication or combination of medications will be best for this patient, based on gender, disease characteristics, severity, ability to maintain compliance, insurance/affordability, and other unique factors about the patient? What other medications is the patient taking that may interact with these drugs?

Tests: Does the patient need any further tests to diagnose or monitor the progression of the disease?

Procedures: Does the patient need any one-time or ongoing procedures in order to treat the illness?

Follow-up care: When should the patient's next appointment be? What if the patient does not show up? Does the patient need any home-based care? Will the pharmacist adequately educate the patient regarding the medications?

Communication: Does the patient have any questions? How will the patient get questions addressed as they arise?

Patient education: What does the patient need to understand about the disease that might confuse them? Is there a class or website that can provide the patient helpful information?

**Summarize**

1. What is the purpose of the Plan in the SOAP Note?
2. Name 3 elements that should be included in the Plan for a patient.

**Research**

Select any disease, illness, or condition. Research the disease to determine its possible treatments or therapies. Many disease will have multiple options for treatment that may be more or less appropriate for an individual patient based on their characteristics. Summarize the disease below and list at least 3 different ways the it could be treated along with the factors that influence which treatment method is selected.

Disease Explanation:	Treatment Options	Factors that influence which treatment is selected