



Query

Eating Disorder Week begins Feb. 27th; Apr. 24th to 30th is Administrative Professionals Week (recently upgraded from Secretaries Week); and, my favourite, Family Doctor's Week, is July 19th to 25th. Then there are a host of lesser topics that fall on a single day, not rating a whole week.

As I walk in the main doors of our clinic there's a bristol board display. Each week the theme changes. One of our employees makes these displays — a marvel of cutouts, colourings, stencils and pamphlets. The displays draw attention to the fact that a new week has come, and with it a new special interest group to consider.

I have no argument with theme weeks. If it helps disseminate a message and the message is one of health, what can it hurt? Instead, I'd like to plead the special case of "the new guy or gal."

Two weeks ago, a new grad from a family practice residency program arrived at our office — his first job outside of residency. Now, it's natural for anyone just starting out to experience some anxiety; but my new colleague was consumed by it. He figured he was an imposter who floated through medical school without learning a single thing or doing a single bit of work. He had no idea how to bill for patients and, to make matters worse, was afraid of our imposing electronic medical record. I know this because he told me. When I reassured him it'd get better and he'd fit in, he looked at me blankly and said he didn't believe it. He was petrified.

I decided the only way to make things better would be for him to just jump in and face all his fears. I didn't want this to be a sink-or-swim scenario, yet how do you instill confidence in the anxiously inconsolable?

I told him I was free to answer his questions, that he could pull me from my examining rooms if he needed a quick and immediate answer. I said I'd be happy to see any patient he wasn't sure about, to give a second opinion. I took pains to make him feel welcome, smiling at him and drawing him into conversations with the other doctors. I asked him questions, treating him as a colleague and not as an inexperienced subordinate.

On a basic level I did all this just to be nice, but there was a deeper reason: I remember when I just started out and an experienced physician gave me much the same treatment. He was there when I was in trouble; he knew where to find things, how to get things; and best of all, he was that requisite security blanket we all need when we start out.

So I'd like to crowd the already crowded field of name weeks with a week dedicated to the New Guy, in the hope that it will concentrate the minds of all us veterans and spur us to take special consideration for the poor sod who's new. We'll call it, auspiciously enough, New Guy Week. Any suggestions as to when the date should fall?

— *Dr. Ursus*