

## ***Advice from Current Chief Residents, 2007***

1. Try not to take things personally. Residents that were your good friends the year before begin to resent your role as the scheduler and disciplinarian, and faculty still see you as a resident instead of a junior colleague. You learn a lot about yourself, though, in the process.
2. Always get both sides of the story in conflict resolution! Never give a quick answer before consulting other chiefs/program director/coordinator
3. Identifying the goals of the residency program and the expectations and rules for the residents is important at the beginning of the year. The chief resident must be an advocate for all the residents, juniors and seniors, and has to consider the effects that they will have even after they leave the program. The chief resident can serve to facilitate communication between the staff and the residents and help to increase understanding on both sides when problems occur.
4. Try to maintain contact with the outgoing chiefs. Contact them with questions. Don't reinvent the wheel.
5. The above question does not leave room for clinical duties such as perioperative management of patients, completing consultations, and participation in the operating room. As chief resident of the neurosurgical service, these duties occupy the majority of my time.
6. It is important to figure out what the department needs most at the time you are chief and what solutions you can offer. I feel I have been encouraged to be a significant leading team member for my department.
7. Understand your job description before you start. Be prepared to see the best and worst of human behavior. Have someone you can laugh with about the crazy stuff you see/experience. If you have more than one chief resident, make sure that you act as a team at all times.
8. Be equally fair to all residents in regards to scheduling conflicts. Know how to delegate the workload equally to residents. Set up periodic meetings with residents to discuss issues and areas needing improvement.
9. Be helpful, but don't do things for people that they need to do for themselves. If you are the sole problem solver, they will not learn to be prepared or responsible.
10. I am just becoming the chief for next year but I am already having to do scheduling and dealing with conflict. The hardest transition is from that of peer to leader. Democracy is important but sometimes a decision must be made and you cannot always please everyone.
11. Be ready for the changing perceptions of you from your peers. There are more political issues than you originally perceived. Try and keep a positive attitude, learn to delegate and use your time well. Set priorities.

12. Pick your battles.

13. Develop a bit of a "thick skin" if you tend to be sensitive to criticism, as this position requires you to make decisions which keep things even for a large group (and therefore can require give & take on the part of individuals, leading to unhappy more than happy people at times).

14. Future chiefs are in a new and unusual role, particularly in our department where the chiefs are R4 residents (not junior staff). They are no longer residents as they once were, and they are not quite faculty. This "limbo" can be hard to navigate, but rewarding once the chiefs get established. Be consistent, be thorough, be fair, be firm, and be empathetic to the problems of residents (just as you would've wanted your previous chiefs to be empathetic to your problems). Above all else, never underestimate the power of your example. And finally, don't get upset if people become unhappy because of something you did or a policy you enforced -- it's not your job to be a people-pleaser, it's your job to help run the department and ensure that residents do their work and get the training they deserve. Have fun!