## 5. Challenging aspects of general practice and Communication with colleagues

**Objectives**

By the end of the attachment you should have:

* reflected on the particular challenges and rewards of a career in General Practice
* interviewed your GP teacher and discussed various strategies for coping
* reflected on the extent these stresses and strategies may be extrapolated and applied to any career in medicine
* considered ways of maintaining a work/life balance

**Challenging aspects of general practice**

All jobs have particular rewards and stresses, and General Practice is no exception. Write down some factors which you feel might stress the GP in his/her work. Some of these will also apply to medical students and doctors in all specialities (including Foundation Year doctors). Ask your GP teacher what he/she perceives as rewarding and stressful in his/her job. Do not be embarrassed to ask, as they will be expecting the question. Do your lists tally? What strategies does your GP teacher use to minimise these stresses? How does your GP teacher deal with:

* breaking bad news
* night calls and Out-of-Hours responsibility
* difficult, demanding or aggressive patients
* uncertainty (i.e. not always making a diagnosis)
* the political changes and external constraints of the NHS
* rationing decisions
* dealing with complaints
* ‘near misses’ or critical incidents

**If any of the above occurs during your attachment, write it up as an SEA and discuss it with your teacher.**