



Next Gen: Succeed With Contributions, Accountability, Relationships And An Entrepreneurial Mindset

As you transition from student to doctor, learning how to apply your clinical knowledge, show up as a contributing member of a new practice and provide the best possible care to your patients can seem overwhelming at first.

Santrell Hart-Moreland, O.D., a PECAA Regional Leader and Georgia-based optometrist leading three-location **Elevated Eyecare**, shares how to become a valuable addition to any private practice, while training to lead your own business by leveraging her **C.A.R.E.** framework.



As a new optometry school graduate, I took on the exciting and intimidating adventure of opening a practice cold.

Now operating a multi-office business along with 10 team members and a goal of providing high-quality eye care, I've learned many things along the way, including the characteristics I look for in new practitioners. These qualities fittingly spell out the acronym C.A.R.E., which I hope make them easy for you to retain and reference throughout your career at an existing practice and your own future business.

Contributions. I'm always looking for my junior doctors to contribute ideas. Ideas on how to make the business profitable, or ones to enhance the quality of our eye care services or the patient experience.

As a young OD, you can create a lasting impact at a practice by asking questions, offering out-of-the-box solutions and challenging the status quo. Be sure to bring your fresh perspective to work every day, and you, the practice and the patients will benefit.

Accountability. This refers to a major way of gaining the respect of your peers and preparing yourself for leadership. Just as you take ownership of your work, take accountability for your mistakes – make amends and simply move forward with the knowledge to make better decisions in the future that will support the growth and success of the practice.

Relationships: While your patient is in your chair for an eye exam, this is your opportunity to connect with them to understand their pain points, goals and symptoms that could be indicative of a deeper health issue.

Be present and curious during appointments and deliver care with empathy while educating the patient on their diagnosis. Relationship building is brand building and what will set your private practice apart from large retail chains and create the best possible outcomes for your patients.

Entrepreneurial Mindset. When I look for junior doctors, I'm hoping to find someone with an interest in understanding what it takes to grow a business. Demonstrate your staying power by practicing comprehensive eye care and taking initiative while managing risk, all while working toward and shaping practice **key performance indicators (KPIs)**. Remember, you'll be working at (and possibly soon leading) a private practice, which will require an all-hands-on-deck approach to move the needle.

Optometry can be extremely rewarding at any career stage, whether as a new optometrist getting your footing or as a practice owner. You have the opportunity to instantly improve someone's life through eye care, and the profession is looking to you as committed and innovative doctors to continue serving the evolving needs of patients.

PECAA Propel is here to support you! For students interested in connecting with a PECAA member doctor for more leadership and practice ownership guidance, reach out to Propel Program Manager Alicia Crider at Alicia.Crider@pecaa.com.