How to approach a medical consultation when you are the patient?

It can be hard to change from thinking like a doctor to thinking like a patient. Sometime doctors and students find it hard to admit they are unwell. They often think they have to have made their own diagnosis and have a management plan in mind. They sometimes think that they shouldn’t seek medical advice unless they are really sick. This means that they don’t attend for preventive health and check ups, they present very late when they are in crisis, and they find it very difficult to seek help for things like stress, depression and anxiety. Sometimes students and doctors conceal the fact that they are in the medical profession or attend an afterhours clinic that doesn’t know them – just so they can be a patient.

Sometimes the doctor finds it hard too, because they are unsure how you want to be approached – like a doctor or like a patient. The best approach is to find a doctor you feel comfortable with – this might take some shopping around. Ask friends and colleagues. Make an appointment and tell the doctor you are a medical student but that you want to be treated like any other patient. If you don’t get better – go back. If you don’t feel comfortable, try another GP.