What You Can Do to Increase Your Own Entrustability and Intraoperative Autonomy

PREOPERATIVELY

- Read about the operation
  - Know textbook operative steps
  - Be aware of potential pitfalls
  - Review videos of similar operations if possible
- Read about the patient
  - Know the operative indication
  - Know comorbidities that may contribute to complications
- Practice applicable skills in simulation lab
- Discuss the case and set shared goals with the attending surgeon
  - Timing of discussion depends on the attending surgeon and type of case
    - Scheduled/elective case: evening before
    - Add-on/urgent/emergent case: during prep dry time or scrubbing
- Let the attending surgeon know you have read and are prepared
- Highlight portions of the case you have previously completed independently
- Suggest an operative plan and ask questions about the overall plan or specific steps
- Identify key goals you have for this operation
- If you are struggling to gain autonomy with a specific attending surgeon, ask senior residents for advice
- Prepare the patient in the preoperative area
- Assist with properly positioning the patient
- Familiarize yourself with necessary instruments/equipment

Sample dialogue from resident/fellow to attending surgeon:

I have reviewed the patient chart.
I have reviewed the description of this procedure found in ___________________________.
I have spent time in the simulation lab practicing specific techniques related to this case.
I have done portions of this type of case before with Dr. ___________________________.
I have set a goal to try to do ___________________________ in this specific case.
What else should I do to prepare for the upcoming procedure?
INTRAOPERATIVELY

☑️ Anticipate upcoming steps and ask questions accordingly
☑️ Suggest a plan for upcoming steps or even the entire operation
☑️ Progress through steps to advance the case with instruction from the attending surgeon as appropriate for your experience level
☑️ Identify solutions to intraoperative struggles and implement solutions as appropriate for your experience level

☑️ Continuously verbalize your thought process while operating. When you are unsure of anatomy or how to proceed, state that.
☑️ If you want to regain autonomy:
  ○ Articulate next steps and ask if you may do that portion of the operation
  ○ Ask the attending surgeon to teach you how they are doing that portion of the operation
☑️ If you are struggling to gain autonomy, ask for specific feedback and commit to work on your deficiency before the next case

Sample dialogue when the attending surgeon has taken over the case:

One day, I will be doing this operation solo; help me understand how you are _____________________.
I know I need to work on the ________________ portion of the case; could you help guide me through it?

POSTOPERATIVELY

☑️ Develop a postprocedure care plan, discuss that plan with the attending surgeon, and ensure the plan is implemented

☑️ Ask for specific feedback in key areas:
  ○ Operative knowledge and plan
  ○ Problem solving
  ○ Operative independence and decision-making
  ○ Areas to practice or improve
  ○ Tissue and instrument handling

Sample dialogue from resident/fellow to attending surgeon:

How was my tissue handling and decision-making?
Did I communicate to you and the team appropriately?
Did the case flow properly?
What should I practice?
How can I improve for next time?