

Max Stockinger

Adult ED Nights

Midterm Clinical Reflection

My first 60 hours in the ED this module can be lumped into three separate experiences, each with its own lessons to learn. These points will be ordered chronologically, not by importance. We were so busy that much of what happened is a blur in my mind but I will at least touch on the 3 major lessons I learned.

Lesson 1: Don't forget to bring a snack (Learned during hours 1-12). You never know when or if you'll be able to make it to the fridge to microwave the fancy leftovers you thought you were going to eat. My nurse and I were in the A pod and for the first 10 hours of the shift, it felt like we were at the nurse's station for a total of ten minutes. There was so much going on that I resorted to asking who needed help and performing whatever skills needed to be done. By the time 0400 came around, I was exhausted and my whole lunch was sitting nice and cold in the fridge.

To preface Lesson 2, I'll quote *House of God*, a satirical novel by Samuel Shem: *Law 3: At a cardiac arrest, the first procedure is to take your own pulse.*

Lesson 2: Don't forget to breathe (Learned in the days after hour 48). Shifts 2-4 consisted of mountains and mountains of charting needing to be done with zero time to do it. I felt so defeated after shifts 3 and 4 that I wasn't sure I'd make it through this preceptorship. From not knowing the answers to questions nurses asked me to failing to keep up with the constant stream of new orders for each patient, I couldn't hold on. I kept having to redo documentation because I would forget to change times and had to fix it again when my nurse pointed things out that needed correction. My nurse and I were both exhausted by Monday morning and I didn't want to think about going back. In the days between shift 4 and 5, I did a lot of self-reflection and learning. I learned (again) the importance of breathing to remain grounded and put things into perspective.

Lesson 3: Don't forget to recognize a job well done (Learned during hours 49-60). Day 5 was a very welcome change. Partly because I was able to focus on just my two patients at a time and partly thanks to diversion, I felt in control of my night. I used lesson 1 and had a baggies of carrots and cheerios sitting next to my computer screen to snack on. I took a deep breath every time I stood up to see a patient. By shift #5, I was communicating well with the ER doc and my nurse, confident in my abilities to receive and give reports, was keeping up with orders, meds, and bed status. I even had time to stock some rooms/carts and assist other nurses with their patients.

I'm feeling much more confident now than I felt a month ago and I'm very excited to continue growing during the next 60 hours of clinical. I will continue to build on these lessons and use them in the future as a student, GN, and eventually RN.