

## My First Preceptorship Experience

Nervousness, stress, and excitement are all words that describe how nursing students can feel at any point in nursing school. Specifically, for me, those were few of the numerous things I was feeling when preparing and experiencing my preceptorship. From the day of finding out where I would be for my preceptorship to present day, I have had a mix of different feelings and experiences.

The first day of class when us students received information about our preceptorship, I was so nervous about what to expect. All I remember feeling is that I was going to take on the role of the nurse. I remember feeling stressed out and very anxious. I did not feel ready or competent to meet the expectations of our preceptorship. I felt even more stressed out knowing I was going to be staffing in the women's and children's hospital because I did not know which floor I was going to first or what to expect on each floor. I remember numerous negative thoughts running through my head about what to expect. I was scared I was going to have a mean preceptor who would not talk to me, let me do anything, or even make me feel bad about myself. I was even scared that the parents of the children I'd be caring for would not let me care for their children since I am a student. Thankfully, most of the worry and stress went away the first day of my preceptorship.

After the process of scheduling the days I would be with my preceptor and finding out the morning of my first day where I would be, a little of the worry and stress went away. I went into the NICU nervously waiting for my preceptor to arrive. When we met, she welcomed me happily. We received report together and immediately after that the teaching began. As we rounded on the patients, she explained things like the safety checks and the importance of taking the patients' vital signs every hour. Then, at the patient's care times, she showed me and explained all what was done during that time. She explained what she was assessing and allowed me to also assess. For example, she would do a respiratory assessment, and then let me do it after. She also oriented me around the NICU throughout our day as we were finding supplies. As the day progressed, I was so relieved of mostly all my fears, anxiety, and worries. I was even very excited to learn and care for the patients. I was very relieved to find out my preceptor was not a mean person and that the parents that were present were kind to me and allowed me to care for their babies. I realized I had been worried and stressed out for no reason. I also realized that with guidance, I was ready and competent to start taking on the role of the nurse. At first, I was scared I was not going to remember how to care for the pediatric population. When my nurse started explaining and showing me care, I was able to remember and apply the knowledge I gained from previous modules.

There are also a few things I learned from my nurse that I would do in my future nursing care. For example, I would organize my care in the way that she did. It was like an hourly check off list of the things that needed to be done each hour. I feel like that is an effective way of ensuring that all care is met. I would also do the least invasive to the most invasive procedures. For example, I would do all the safety checks around the area and then start doing things like taking the patient's vital signs and assessments to changing their diaper or brief in the adult world.

Overall, from that first day to present day, I learned that my preceptorship was not something to worry, stress out about, or fear. It is simply a progressive learning experience of how to take on the role of the nurse. I learned that I was not expected to be able to do it all on the first day and that I will progressively get better and more comfortable to take on the role of the nurse as time continues.