

## NICU Alternative Assignment

## 1. NICU Training Scenario: Cincinnati Children's: Reflection →

From my own personal experiences, I know all too well how much proper communication from your loved one's healthcare team can make or break a situation. Although, I don't have a child of my own to have had experienced this type of feeling with, I do have a brother who I've gone through serious medical situations with. Knowing that your loved one relies on you to ensure they're receiving proper care, attention and that their needs are being met is a lot of weight to carry as a sister, so I can only imagine how heavy that weight can feel as the parent. In the Cincinnati Hospital's training video, each parent was expecting the bare minimum from their nurses. From receiving a thorough update on their baby, to not having to listen to gossip or complaints from the healthcare staff, the parents in the video were just simply hoping for attentive, caring nurses for their children. There's nothing wrong with expecting any of that from your child's healthcare team. In fact, the nurses should care for their patients as they would their own family members and I can say from being the family member in a situation similar, although you know both sides, you want nothing but the best type of care for your loved one when you're in that situation.

## 2. Tour of the NICU, Equipment, and Admission to NICU, RNs: Reflection →

It's very clear based on these videos recorded in different facilities that each facility has its own quirks. Some have nicer equipment than others and some have more availability than others, but one thing that rings true is that they all have a similar goal. With the equipment shown in each video, as well as the way each piece was educated on, each facility is working for the greater good of the baby and their family. One piece that really surprised me was the video of the Children's Hospital in Wisconsin. I thought it was pretty incredible that they had select rooms made available and designed purposely in order to accommodate parents who were having extended stays because they were trying to be present for their baby's. The ability to offer a reprieve for parents even when they may not want to take it is just really encouraging overall and can give those parents even the smallest thread of rest in order to be their best for their baby.

## 3. Discuss medication safety in this patient population. What are the considerations for safe medication administration to this vulnerable population?

Proper medication dosing for this patient population relies heavily on knowing your patient's current weight. This helps ensure that they're not being given any more than their little bodies can handle. For safe medication admin, we're ensuring we have proper identification on the baby, we're monitoring their vitals closely and ensuring nothing is too high or too low, especially in regards to the temperature. We have certain equipment dedicated to certain sized newborns, ensuring that they're getting exactly what they may need at all times.

## 4.

4. Reflect on social situations seen in the NICU and differences in parent involvement in the NICU. Provide a discussion/reflection on both.

In the NICU, you'll often see unattended babies. Every now and then however, you'll see a baby being held by their parent(s) or even by caregivers. Either way, the more of this type of stimulation they get, the better. Trying to heal, learn, and grow on your own is difficult and discouraging for anyone, let alone a baby. They need to hear their mother/father's voice. They need to be skin to skin with them and sharing in those moments. It's those moments that are going to start to facilitate growth and a sense of bonding with the parents. The parent's voices and touch are much like a guide for the baby to figure out exactly what it is they need to do in order to get out of the hospital and go home with their families.

5. Explain how the nurse and unit alters the environment to reduce infant stimuli and promote health for the NICU baby.

The unit does its best to maintain a quiet environment, as well as dimly lit patient rooms/atmosphere. They perform cluster care to ensure they're not waking/disturbing the babies sleep any more than they absolutely have to. Maintaining low voices and just simply minimizing noise overall. They do their best to provide a minimally stimulating environment for each and every baby.

6. What are the criteria for discharge from the NICU from the caregiver's perspective?

The criteria for discharge comes down to the baby reaching all the necessary growth and development required in order to go home. They should also have follow-up appointments set for after the baby is able to go home. Caregivers want to be able to ask questions in regards to the baby and have their concerns fully looked into and followed up with answers. They should have discharge goals laid out for the families to ensure that not only does the baby know what's happening with their body, but mom and dad know what should happen upon returning home, so that they're not frantic when any little thing happens.

7. What are the criteria for discharge from the NICU from a parent's perspective?

Not only should baby be hitting all their milestones, but the parent's should be hitting their milestones as well. They need to know how to properly install a car seat and they need to ensure they have all the necessary supplies at home ready and waiting for baby. They need to know how to properly take baby's temperature, how to prepare formula/bottle, how to bathe and swaddle the baby, etc.

8. What do you think are some of the challenges of being a NICU nurse? What are some of the most rewarding things about being a NICU nurse?

When it comes to being a NICU nurse, I imagine it can be hard taking care of the sickest and most innocent of patients. Not only that, but I can only imagine how hard it can be caring for an infant

that you know is not going to make it. Trying to calm down new parents and even repeat parents. Trying to bring a sense of normalcy to the lives of people whose worlds were turned upside down the second their baby was brought to you. Reward wise however, I can only imagine the feeling when a long-time patient gets to graduate from the NICU or even more so when you get to see a baby you cared for years later doing well and growing as they should. Getting to be ever present in families lives and be a light to them when they feel completely helpless watching their little one struggle. Getting to care for the tiniest of humans and help them through their difficult entry into the world is a blessing and a privilege in and of itself.