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IM - 8

Final Reflection

We have always heard that nursing is one of the most underappreciated professions. As cliché as it sounds, it has been very evident during the last half of my clinical preceptorship at South 4. I have personally experienced how patients inappropriately treat the nurses who are taking care of them. I have experienced how ungrateful patients can become to the things I did for them. Some patients can become physically violent towards the caregivers. Others can become manipulative and verbally abusive. However, after all witnessing these kinds of insensitivity towards the caregivers, I never saw them fight back or answer with hateful words. One time my nurse and I had this patient who seemed to be very sick and withdrawn and seldom engaged in communication with us. My nurse was trying to educate me about the medications and the leg support the patient had since he just came from a procedure when we saw that one of the stickers of the heart monitor on the patient's chest came off. Just when my nurse was about to reattach the sticker, the patient cruelly stopped her and talked to her with profanity. My nurse calmly deescalated the situation and briefly explained that she was just trying to fix the monitor on his chest. We were both surprised to how the patient had reacted, and I asked the nurse how she manages to deal with these kinds of patients and her answer created an impact on me. She said that these patients are on the verge of losing their lives, they are very sick, nothing is going right for them, they are at the worst moment of their lives, it is as if the world had turned its back against them, hence, you would not expect them to be always amicable to you even if everything you do is to care for them and help them feel comfortable. She said that as nurses, we can only try our best to understand their situation and try our best to provide the best care for them because that is our job but never forget that you are also a human being and part of your humanity is sharing the suffering of others. This made me realize a deeper understanding of the true meaning of being a compassionate nurse.

The last half of my clinical preceptorship, especially the last three nights last week, had provided me with a deeper sense of connection with myself. I think I have finally found the best reason to engage myself more in caring for others. I had this patient who had been admitted for blood loss and anemia and who had also been going for TTS dialysis. The first night with this patient was kind of rough because he was not welcoming at all. He was always withdrawn and he did not provide direct answers to each of our questions. He was mad about everything and raises his voice when we beg him to repeat his answers. It was hard communicating with him because he sometimes garbles his words and speaks softly. On the last set of vitals for the morning, we had to put him last on our list because he had a hard time sleeping and we wanted him to get more sleep. I went inside his room at around 4:45AM to check his vitals, got everything ready for a wipe down as well since he is going for an EGD procedure first thing in the morning. I knocked on his door and told him that I would do his set of vitals first, draw blood after it, and then wipe him down for his procedure. He agreed with apprehension because he said that he just barely got any sleep. I was about to be finished documenting his set of vitals when he started coughing. I gave him some napkins thinking that he would just spit it out on the napkin just as he used to do the previous night. I did not know that he started vomiting on himself and on his bed because I was documenting, and he got mad at me. He started yelling at me and blamed me for what happened to him. He said that if I hadn't woken him up, this would not happen to him. I told him I was sorry, but I had to prepare him before his procedure plus, we had to collect data that we should put on his chart as part of our job. He just lay on his bed and said nothing as I and my nurse tried to wipe the throw up from him

and on his bed. My nurse said to let him settle down for a while and come back later on. I asked him if there was anything I could do for him, and he shouted back that I already did, pointing out about his vomit on himself and on his bed. I felt bad and never went back to his room for the rest of the morning. My nurse had to ask the help of another nurse to go and prepare him because she said that the patient might reject my care so I agreed. That situation really got on my mind that I even dreamt about it when I went home to sleep. The following night, I thought of just taking care of the other three patients that we had and never go to him for what happened, but then I told myself, that things like this will happen more in the near future and there is nothing I could do but to deal with them so might as well just take him again. If he rejects me then I would just need to talk to my nurse for a different set up. I went back to his room on the second night full of hope that I might establish rapport with him and the first thing he told me was, "Oh you are back, I thought I already got rid of you last night." I just told him that since I was assigned to him, he had no choice but to bear with me because I have nothing against him for what happened, and I hope that he could give me another chance to establish a better relationship with him. Every time I was in his room, I explained everything that was going to happen and gave him a head-up about waking him up again at around 4AM to check his last round of vitals, draw blood and prepare him for his dialysis the next day. He agreed to everything although with hesitance. On the second night, I was always there in his room because he felt really sick and we had to give him medications and attend to his needs. He slowly started talking to me more in a casual way and started sharing about his job before, his family and his grandchildren. He said that he was very proud about her daughter and missed his grandchildren who were just 9 and 5 years old because they were not allowed to visit on the floor. He started joking around and we started laughing. I was able to make him feel good that night.

On the third night that I was assigned to him, I felt that he was more engaged in communicating with me and my nurse. Although he was a little bit moody, he was more open to interacting with me and every time I was in his room, I could feel that I had gained his trust. He had always been alone during the nights since his wife had to go home and could only visit during the day. I felt that he had been longing for someone to talk to regarding things that had nothing to do with his illness or anything about him staying in the hospital. At that time, I slowly started getting to understand more about his side and he shared how no one on the floor for the past few days and nights was able to understand the way he acts. I know that he could be rude and most of the time unpleasant, but it only takes a little extension of understanding and patience and I was able to get his trust. On the last set of vitals for the morning, I woke him up and he had been very friendly just as he did when I started my shift. Before I left his room, he asked me if I was going back to work again the following night. I told him that it was my last day of clinicals and would not be back. I could see the dismay on his face when I told him that and he just told me to take care of myself. I could see that he grew fond of me because I stayed with him even if we were not able to establish a good relationship on the first night. Before I went home, I made sure to go back to his room and bid him good bye. I told him how much I enjoyed his company and that I was glad that he was one of my patients for the last nights of my clinical preceptorship. He congratulated me and thanked me for not giving up on him. I went home with a sense of hope, and I prayed that whoever is assigned to him for the following shifts would take some time to be with him and understand him just as I did. Sometimes we will meet our patients in the worst moment of their lives and things could start differently, but if we just spend more time with them, I believe that things go the way we hope them to be.