

Riding the Blue Wave

As you can probably guess, this reflection is about my first Code Blue. To be more specific, it was the result of a Rapid Response during my second day of my preceptorship. (Just as the IM 8 instructors had predicted may happen.)

To start from the beginning, I was only a few hours into the morning of the shift when I heard "Rapid Response - Peace 4" announced overhead. I was in the middle of helping my preceptor change a peripheral IV dressing, when she looked at me and calmly said "You're going to respond when they arrive. Are you comfortable with that?" Anxiously, I blurted out "YES" (probably not as cool and calmly as I probably should have been.) After that, silence. She finished up with the dressing change, casually joking with our patient. Meanwhile I feel the perspiration start to leach into the sleeves of my scrub top. I was getting excited. Although such an unfortunate event that we never actually WANT to happen to someone, we all know as nurses that it is bound to happen. And this was going to be my very first one.

Some time goes by, and I feel as if I am anxiously pacing near the hallway, just waiting for them to be rolled in so I can spring into action. Addison kept her cool the entire time. About 10 minutes after the announcement, she said "hey, go pop your head out and see if they're here." So I did, and they were. I rushed back over to let her know, and she calmly wrapped up with our patient, and told them we will return in a bit.

Everything after this moment was a fast paced blur. We rushed over to the patients room to see a flood of staff in there. I would guess every employee on the unit was packed into that ICU room. I grabbed a pair of gloves and made my way into the wave of controlled chaos. Addison guided me where to go, next in line to do chest compressions.

The time came where I was up, and I grabbed the stool and hopped up there and started doing what I have trained every quarter for as a CNA hospital employee. As I was doing compressions on the pulseless man in below me, I looked at his face and into his eyes. I'VE SEEN THIS MAN BEFORE. Where did I know him from? I couldn't think of it at the time, but I kept compressing harder on his chest. I couldn't get the look of his face out of my mind. I looked up at the monitor and saw that he was still in asystole. I did compressions for two minutes on him before Makenna hopped up next. Within seconds, we had a rhythm and a pulse. I was filled to the brim with adrenaline, almost as if I was the one who had received the multiple doses of epinephrine.

As the flooded room began to thin out, I was watching and observing the continued care that was being given by the remaining doctors and nurses. I was stunted on who this man was and why he looked so familiar. As the code came to an end, I was exiting the room when I got a glimpse of his name. Then it all came back to me. The man that was lying lifeless below me just moments earlier was a patient that I had taken care of over the summer working as a CNA. I remembered specifically what floor I was on and I remember our interactions clear as day. I could not believe that I had just preformed CPR on him. Thinking back to our interactions this past summer, never would I have thought that I would've seen him again; much less in the state of distress that he was in.

We then returned to our patients and Addison gave me a high five and told me that I did amazing. I was beaming inside. Still flooded with the rush of adrenaline, I tried to sit and contemplate on my role and how I played a part in this code. Thinking of all the things I could have done differently, acknowledging the things I did well, and just feeling the flood of appreciation of how fulfilling it was to help save this mans life.