

Midterm Reflection

For the first two shifts of my preceptorship, I had the opportunity to work on the pediatric oncology floor. The floor itself is new so the nursing staff was a lot smaller than I had anticipated. This seemed to work out however as each nurse was able to divide their attention between two patients during the shift. Although I was unable to participate in the transfusions and chemotherapy, I did get the opportunity to witness and observe quite a bit. This was extremely exciting for me as Oncology has been the goal for me since beginning my nursing career. It was nice to be able to return the second shift and continue care for the patient I had previously.

Upon arriving for my first shift, I was extremely anxious, I wasn't sure what to expect and also had the fear that I wouldn't be enough help. However, the nursing staff was so welcoming and kind that it helped shake a lot of those nerves. My preceptor has already opened my eyes to a lot and is definitely inspiring for me. She too always had the end goal of working with oncology patients, so it is nice to get a glimpse of what may hopefully be my future one day. I really do like the overall culture of the floor and how you can tell how much the nursing staff genuinely care for each patient. This is the first opportunity I've had to work with oncology patients, and I'm already enjoying the continuity of care. Being able to build a genuine connection with my patients is very important to me and working in this field it's very apparent the nurses feel the same way.

Although I have only been able to complete two shifts, I am very grateful to be given the opportunity to experience working with pediatric oncology hands on. The mutual respect and teamwork between the nurses was refreshing to see. It was easier than I expected to be able to integrate and join in to help in anyway I could. I got into nursing after witnessing my younger cousin go through treatment for ALL twice. The first day we were assigned two patients with the same diagnosis. I won't lie that I've always had the fear that working with kids in the same condition may be triggering, but it in fact was the complete opposite. It felt so rewarding to be able to pass on the care that we received as a family when my cousin was going through treatment.

I found it a lot easier to communicate not only with the patient but with the family than I had expected. However, in our particular case there was one parent that was more difficult to navigate. I was informed by my

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02/03/25

preceptor that they had been experiencing some difficulty regarding miscommunication and what the parent felt was inconsistency. Luckily, my preceptor and I were able to remain neutral and a sort of “safe ground” for the patient and parent. I can’t lie I myself found it a little difficult to remain neutral due to the lack of care presented from the parent. It was good experience though, as I’m sure this won’t be the last time I come across this same dynamic between a patient and parent.

I definitely will be able to apply this specific scenario to my future practice. Having the opportunity to work with a “difficult” parent is something I need to feel comfortable with if I want to work with pediatric patients. It was a great reminder of why I got into nursing in the first place. My cousin was lucky to have a solid support system but unfortunately that isn’t always the case. It is in those moments that having a nurse who genuinely cares makes all the difference. This patient was showing clear signs of depression, and the lack of support system was made extremely evident just in the two days I was allowed to work with the patient.

I was able to apply the psychological aspect of nursing in my practice which I haven’t had the opportunity to do so since that clinical rotation. Overall, these shifts have been a very rewarding experience, in a sense they are slowly but surely solidifying the passion I have to work with oncology patients. I’ve learned just how critical continuity of care is to all patients of course, but specifically to this demographic of patients. I was able to witness a lot of communication not only between nurse and patient, but between many members of the healthcare team. I know that I may not always be on this specific floor, but I definitely hope to get the opportunity to experience it again.