

Hospice Reflection Journal – Caitlyn Silas

1a.) I honestly wasn't sure what to expect for this clinical. When I think of hospice care, I think of end of life and people that are getting ready to pass. I think of fear, peace sadness, all kinds of emotions that go along with death. I also think about grieving families who know their loved one is going to pass soon.

1b.) My experience was eye opening to what the hospice nurses provide for the patient and families. They care so deeply with everything they have in them even if the patient was not there even 24 hours. They also help the family reminisce and think of all the good things that have happened with their loved one. Hospice care is truly something special that should be available to everyone at the end of life.

2.) Something about my experience that stands out is that as soon as I walked into the Inpatient Hospice Unit, a nurse was checking for heart and breath sounds to declare that a patient has passed. They have to listen for the apical pulse for a full minute and lung sounds as well in order to declare that someone has passed. I did not know what to think or how to respond because before that, I had never seen a nurse do that. The nurse broke the news to the family over the phone and allowed them to come in and take as long as they needed with the patient. After they had enough time, we went into the room and performed postmortem care, I also have never seen or done this before. I was very nervous to do it, but the nurse walked me through it and helped me along the way. It was just like giving a bed bath, when we were finished we redressed the patient and then allowed the family to say their final goodbyes and then the funeral home came and did their part.

3.) One key experience for me was providing postmortem care since I have never done that before. It felt very different from anything I have done before but I realized that we are helping that patient even in the afterlife and are preserving their dignity. This experience enhanced my knowledge about what hospice nurses are all about and the services that they provide. I had a very great preceptor to show me and help me realize what hospice is all about. I will defiantly be recommending hospice care to anyone who is a good candidate for it because I had a great experience and it seems to truly help the grieving families as well.

4.) The experience did change my way of thinking. I have a lot more respect for what hospice nurses do. I wish all patients could get this kind of treatment that they provide. I always knew residents in nursing homes were not getting the best care that they could, but the type of care they provide is out of this world. I understand nursing homes cannot provide this due to staffing issues, but I wish they could. While I was at this clinical my nurse had 3 patients and could really focus on all 3 with everything they could possibly need. Everyone deserves the nurses and caregivers full attention and not to feel like their care is rushed through.

5.) My overall feelings are that I am glad I had this experience. I knew I would have to see a dead body one day, but I never knew how it would make me feel. After my nerves went away about helping with postmortem care and it was over, I actually felt thankful that I was able to help maintain the patient's dignity and make them look and feel better even after passing. I could feel the emotions the family was feeling, and it was heartbreaking. Hospice provides a little veteran memorial service for the patient if they served, so I was able to see that, and it was a

great tribute to the patient. We lined up in the hallway and they said a nice memorial tribute speech to the patient and family, and then presented a flag to the loved ones in memorial of him.