

Nikki Papenfuss 06/03/24

When I started working at the hospital I worked in the ER as a registrar. I was shy and didn't really know how to talk to people but over time my favorite patients were our troubled patients, patients being seen for mental health issues. I understand these patients, they are just looking for someone to listen to them, someone to understand them, and I was that person for them. Almost every one of the patients that I seen that were there looking for guidance and help, would tell me that they appreciated me and that I was the only person who listened to them and understood them and didn't make them feel judged or looked down upon. I learned how to talk to these patients just by listening to them and relate on their level. Just by talking to them like they are family. These patients are here for a reason they want help and a listening ear. We all go through rough times some a litter rougher than others and when you hit a point you just need someone to listen and when family has turned away sometimes that one stranger who does not judge you and offers you the slightest comfort is all you need to change a bad day into a good day. I try to offer these individuals a good laugh sometimes that good cry is all they need. I have learned from working in the ER and watching a therapist get punched in the face on two separate occasions that body language and how you speak to someone, your tone makes all the difference in how they respond. I learned that I never wanted to be that therapist, she was not the nicest to the workers and the patients. But could you imagine that toll that her job probably took on her mentally and physically, you do become desensitized in a sense. Being self-aware and recognizing that burnout is key and then it is time for a change in scenery. How I am at work and how I am at home are two different personalities. My family would say that I have a bubbly personality, but I am straight to the point, say what is on my mind, and sometimes that is an issue. I am not as sensitive as they would like. I will not deny any of the claims. This stems from my own personal trauma of trusting the wrong individuals in my younger years and not trusting that feeling of this isn't a person to socialize with. From my own personal experiences. As for my work life I am a lot more social. I have met a ton of people working at the hospital and developed a work relationship with them. I do carry a bubbly personality and I am there to make you smile and hope to make you have an even better day than where it started. You never know what another person is going through, and a simple hello could change their day, or even asking them how their day is going and listening means the world to some individuals. Over the years I have been working on being more empathetic, learning how to ask those open-ended questions. I am working on being a better active listener and on nonverbal communication skills. I have learned to make eye contact when talking to people and limit my facial expressions. Over the years learning triggers for individuals has saved me.