

Hospice Reflection Journal/ Paper

Going into this hospice experience I was extremely nervous. I honestly didn't know what to expect but I did think that there would be more patients on the floor than there were. I expected myself to be nervous and anxious the whole time and not really feel comfortable doing anything other than watching the nurses on the floor and trying to stay out of the way. I think I got the exact opposite of my expectations. There were only seven patients on the floor. I was expecting for there to be more. I came in with the mindset that hospice would be set up like the floors at main campus. I also got the exact opposite of what I expected out of myself during this experience. I thought I would be nervous and not want to do much and stay out of the way. I was not nervous at all after talking to the nurses I would be with, and I was open to helping and learning from them and getting to do things and interacting with the patients instead of shying away from the opportunities that were given to me to do things. I got to see things that I have not gotten to see in prior clinical yet and even got the chance to complete a skill that I have not gotten the opportunity to complete in my other clinical experience before now. Before this I had only experienced hospice from the side of a patient family member. I enjoyed getting to experience hospice from the nurse's side of it rather than from the side of a family member of the patient. I had only seen the side of it as a 17 high schooler who's great grandmother was dying. I was angry and thought that everyone was giving up on her so I just thought all the nurses did was come and change her and leave. I was unaware of how much the hospice nurses actually do before now.

One thing that really stood out to me about this experience was how they give their subcutaneous medications. Before today I had no idea that a SubQ button was a thing. I was able to what one be placed, and it was so quick and simple. They have a button for each medication that must be administered subcutaneously, and they are placed for 2-3 days and then should be changed out. The buttons are kept in place with tegaderm and labeled with the medication being administered to that particular button as well as the date and initials of the nurse placing the button. When the medication is scheduled or if its PRN when needed, the correct dose is drawn into a syringe and administered into the SubQ button through a port connected with a catheter. It makes it so that the nurse does not have to repeatedly stick the patient who is already uncomfortable and in pain.

I feel that the key thing that affected how I think about this experience was just talking to the nurses. They made me feel so much more comfortable and they taught me so much. They explained everything to me as they were doing it. I loved this experience. I believe it was a very educational experience for me. I appreciate the nurses for actually teaching me and not treating me like someone who is there to do the work so that they do not have to do it. I also appreciate that they gave me the opportunity to do things as well so I was not just following them around like a lost puppy either. This experience taught me a lot about the end-of-life process and how to go about caring for the patients in the most therapeutic way while also caring for the families in a therapeutic way as well. I never imagined that I would ever have to deal with end-of-life care but

now if I ever do, I will at least have knowledge that is needed to care for the patient effectively and appropriately.

1. How do you think you did with this experience emotionally?

I think that I did well emotionally with this experience. This entire unit has me nervous because I sometimes have problems controlling my own mental health and I get emotional seeing other people struggling or being sad. Even the fact there was a possibility that any of the patients could have passed while I was there had me worried and stressing about if I would be able to keep myself from crying seeing someone die. But even though it made me sad to see the patients in their condition I believed I did extremely well with the control of my emotions and how I handled my initial anxiety.

2. Would this experience change future actions?

I believe for me, yes. This experience has completely changed my outlook on how end-of-life care is done. If I were able to do this again in the future, it would be completely different. I would not come in as anxious as I did this time. I would not be so awkward and silent in the beginning. I feel I would probably take more initiative and do things that I know I am allowed to do to help the nurses without them having to ask me to do it.

Overall I think I got a very comforting feeling from this experience. Knowing that I was able to aid in making someone more comfortable in a time that usually they feel helpless. Even if it was just by doing little things like washing their face and doing oral hygiene. It made me feel good and made my anxiety go away. Knowing that I am helping makes me feel better about my abilities as a nurse going forward.