

Firelands Regional Medical Center
School of Nursing
Hospice Reflection Journal/Paper
Psychiatric Nursing
2024

Write a 700-900-word paper reflecting your thoughts and ideas regarding your Hospice experience.
Objective:

1. Identify the main theme-
 - a. Provide your expectations for this experience. Were your expectations met, provide examples. (Suggestion: Write down your expectations before the hospice experience, then you can objectively reflect on if these expectations were met)
 - b. Provide at least 3 descriptive sentences that summarize your experience.
2. Write about something that stands out about your experience, include specifics, write a story about your experience.
3. List main points or key experiences that affected how you think about your experience. Share your beliefs and ideas about your experience. Tell how this experience changed or did not change your beliefs or enhanced your knowledge.
4. Ask yourself questions about the experience and how it may or may not relate or impact you. Ex.- Has the experience changed your way of thinking, did it bother you, would the experience change future actions?
5. Conclusion-
 - a. Discuss your overall feelings or understanding you received as a result of this experience.

The Reflection Journal will be due at the same time your Clinical Tool is due for that week (Saturday at 2200), and should be placed in the Hospice Reflection Journal Dropbox on Edvance360.

(1a). Before this clinical experience, I had the expectation I would be seeing many people on the verge between life and death. I was expecting to be doing post-mortem care and to be acting as a support system for the families. I was also expecting the mood to feel heavy and negative. When I arrived at the clinical, all the nurses were cheerful and radiated positive energy. They explained that they keep their spirits high and make the environment as enjoyable as possible. I also realized that some patients are there temporarily on respite, to help with caregiver burnout. I was not aware hospice did that prior. I was also shocked by the age range; I took care of someone who was 45 and another patient who was 101. Hospice exceeded the expectations I had given them. (1b). Working as a student nurse on the hospice unit changed my perspective on death and dying, and I gained a lot of communication skills to family members. I spent my day doing bed baths, oral hygiene, transfers to a commode, and communicating with patients and family members. The emotional aspect of being a nurse in hospice was quite intense, and I learned how much families rely on nurses for support. I listened to my nurse on phone calls to the patient's family members or spoke to them at the bedside. I was able to speak to the physician, social worker, and priest to gain a better understanding of how nurses work as an interprofessional team. (2). One thing that stood out to me was the strength the family members have. When I was 15 my grandfather was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer, and I remember being an emotional wreck when I spent time visiting him at hospice. My grandma was always strong and supportive, and I never understood how she was able to maintain her composure until today. When you are caring for a loved one who is terminal or is suffering, you want them to pass quickly and peacefully. The strength and the bravery of the family members inspired me. The patient I helped most today was diagnosed with the same cancer my grandfather had, and I was allowed to view things from a different perspective. Despite the sadness that accompanies hospice care, it is rewarding to be able to take care of a patient and have them spend their final days in comfort surrounded by their loved ones. (3). One key experience that affected my day was the relationship with the nurses. The nurses use each other to share their feelings and stressors, they make each other laugh, and they uplift one another when it is a difficult day. This changed my perspective

on hospice and I realized it is not always gloomy and saddening. Another key experience was listening to my nurse provide comfort to a family who needed it. This showed me how crucial communication is, and how one person can make a possible impact on a families life regardless of the circumstances. I found it very interesting how family members are able to visit at any time, and can stay as long as they want to. Some of the sofas can be pulled out into a bed, and the staff makes the family members feel as comfortable as possible during their stay. There were family rooms, a dining area, and many sitting areas for the patients and families to gather. (4). Hospice changed my way of perceiving death and dying. Although it is sad, it also can end suffering of a patient and provide them with peace. I came across a spouse who was waiting for their loved one to die, and she wished the time would come sooner. Many loved ones have gone through the stages of grieving and are ready for the patient to be at eternal peace. I always thought of negativity when I thought of hospice, and it is partially because of my experience of losing my grandfather at a young age. I now can understand that hospice is not always negative, and it does not always mean a person is going to die if they are admitted. I was able to witness the adaptability, empathy, positivity, and knowledge from the nurses and it was inspiring. (5). Overall, I enjoyed my clinical experience at Stein Hospice. I personally do not think hospice care is for me, but I do find it rewarding to provide comfort, support, and compassion to the patient during their most vulnerable state. I felt especially bad today for the 45-year-old patient I helped today. His parents are taking care of them, but since they are aging it gets too tasking for them. It was difficult seeing someone so young have a terminal illness, but I was able to spend a lot of time in the room providing support. I feel like I have a better and more positive understanding of hospice, and how it works. I was able to learn a lot from this clinical experience, and it gave me new perspectives on life.