

### Accountability is Your Legacy

The nursing profession has been voted the most trusted profession for 22 years in a row. I hope to be a part of that for as long as I can. Accountability is something I always thought I had. I always took accountability and responsibility for my mistakes, actions, and attitude. So, when it was point blank in my face I felt humiliated, mortified, ashamed. I literally felt a betrayal to myself. At that moment I was quite confused as to what was going on. But once I was able to process what I didn't do and what I should have done it was clear to me that I was not accountable, not only to myself but also my instructors. I in fact did not read the feedback I was given. It really wasn't that I didn't want to do the assignment correctly, I just didn't do it. I still don't understand what was going through my head at the time. I am now in the present and am ready to do the extra work I have to do to get right with myself and my instructors. I have been taking a good look at what accountability really is and I am taking accountability back, for me and hopefully in the eyes of my instructors. Maybe I can be a role model for my fellow students and co-workers. They deserve it and so do I. Even though my resources are mostly from the nursing standpoint, I believe that they should extend to all aspects of a person's life.

Nursing Made Incredibly Easy states that The American Nursing Association's Code of Ethics defines professional accountability as being "answerable to oneself and others for one's own actions." This quote is exactly how I have always felt, so I can see that it is easy to misplace your standards under certain situations. I am also seeing as I write this that reflecting is, in a way, accountability and responsibility. Accountability not only refers to interactions with our patients, their families and friends, vendors, physicians, phlebotomists, x-ray techs, immediate co-workers, it encompasses all people we come encounter throughout our days. At work or

otherwise. Nurses are accountable to the patient to take care of them in a manner that is respectful, caring, and compassionate. Everyone deserves to be treated the same as everyone else, no matter their status in life or the place they grew up, the color of their skin or the differences we may have between us. Healthcare is no place for judgement but is a place for accountability and responsibility.

Accountability also includes giving our patients the best care possible, even if it means they may not like or understand what is happening to them. It is the nurse's responsibility (therefore accountability) for the patient, and the nurse, to educate the patient about the necessity of the process, procedure, or need for what we are asking them to do. We need to take the time to ask the right questions, for the patient to ask us questions and give them the best information possible. Encourage them and let them have time to think about what they have learned. They may still refuse but at least they were given the information to make an informed decision that is best for them. We must respect that, otherwise, it may damage our accountability, even though we took the responsibility to inform them.

The Nurse Journal states that there are nine provisions in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. Number four pertains to accountability, which is "The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice, makes decisions, and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care." Not just nurses, but student nurses also have this responsibility. Even though we are not yet in the thick of things, we are there to learn how to promote health and provide optimal care and the responsibility and accountability that will help make them the best nurse possible, me included. This article also states that "nurses, (and I will add student nurses), must adhere to all relevant laws, regulations,

and practice standards, including guidelines set forth by nursing boards, and professional bodies, to ensure their actions comply with the highest standards of care.”

Nurses, and student nurses, have professional standards that are required to be upheld. They must be responsible to maintain their professional licensure, making them accountable for professional growth, continuing education, keeping up with evidence-based practice. We have standards that include to do no harm. For example, to be diligent, methodical, and focused during medication administration, practicing the seven rights of medication administration every single time we give medications.

We must make decisions for the patient’s best interest, while being aware of our possible differences in culture, religion, morals, and standards, making sure your decisions are aligned with their religious needs and cultural beliefs. The nurse must advocate for their patients, especially when they cannot. Your patients’ welfare and safety are of utmost importance, but do not forget to follow the safety protocols for yourself, (accountability and responsibility). Nurses are accountable for their professional conduct, which has extremely high standards that must be adhered to.

Nursing Made Incredibly Easy states that “not only do we need to hold high clinical practice and ethical standards for ourselves, but we must be willing to accept professional responsibility when or if deviations from care standards occur.” Nurses work long shifts and have stressful jobs. Daily, nurses face time challenges and increasing job demands. Our patients are living longer, have chronic illnesses and are of higher acuity than ever before, which makes nurses’ workload more hectic. These factors can increase the chances of mistakes and potentially decrease accountability due to the increasing demands placed upon nurses as the nursing shortage continues. As I have learned, accountability cannot be put on the shelf, it is one of the most

important standards nurses have in their toolbox to keep themselves in check and humble.

Nursing Made Incredibly Easy notes “Although our professional accountability allows us to celebrate our success, it also demands that we be honest and forthcoming...”

While accountability is one of the most important standards of nursing, receiving, and accepting feedback is a tool that can help a nurse move forward and be a better nurse as a result. But giving or receiving feedback can be difficult on either side. I personally think receiving feedback can be more emotional depending on the situation. Although I really do not know for sure, as I have not been a manager or someone responsible for other’s performances that required feedback.

Nursing 2018 remarks that

...feedback is a two-way street, many find it easier to give than receive. Think about performance reviews, preceptor evaluations, grades in school, presentation ratings and professional peer review. Do those processes provoke anxiety, or do they inspire openness to new insights and potential growth opportunities? Most important, how do you react? The honest answer to that question will likely influence the trajectory of your career.

I find feedback helpful, if it is constructive and not made to make a person feel that they are being talked down to or disrespected. I find that there are at least two ways to give feedback. One is demeaning and thoughtless and the other thoughtful, meaningful, respectful, and thought provoking. The first, I believe, comes from a place where the manager is insecure and unable to control the situation. The other is very aware and understands how to give feedback that is helpful, straight to the point, unapologetic but sincere and honest.

hrb.org states that Harvard Business Review thinks

It is rarely useful to give feedback to colleagues. The authors argue that constructive criticism won't help people excel and that when you highlight someone's shortcomings, you actually hinder their learning. They say managers should encourage employees to worry less about their weakness and instead focus on their strengths.

But hbr.org notes that "The Center for Creative Leadership Research and Experience came to a different conclusion: Feedback, both positive and negative is essential to helping managers enhance their best qualities and address their worst so they can excel at leading."

Hbr.org does agree with some points made by The Harvard Review, such as "harsh feedback does not help people thrive and excel...(That) positive feedback is critical for learning...(And) telling someone how to fix a problem is often the wrong approach."

But they disagree on other points. Which include

"People are unreliable assessors of others and thus give feedback that is more distortion than truth...Feedback about weaknesses creates a threat that inhibits learning...People should just focus on their strengths...(and) You can best help your organization by getting better at the things you are already good at."

Hrb.org believes "When you focus only on strengths, you lull people into believing there are not areas in which they need to improve...Instead of encouraging people to avoid negative

feedback, we should focus on how to deliver negative feedback in ways that minimize the threat response...”

I think this lesson on feedback and accountability is insightful and educational. I know that I missed a lot of accountability and feedback that would have been helpful to complete my assignments properly, and on time. It would have saved me from having to do extra work. Also, I would have better understood what I was supposed to do and would have had a better outcome. Again, I was not in the right place in my head, but that is not an excuse, it’s just reality. I have never been against feedback and constructive criticism. In fact, I believe in it. I believe that it brings about changes that are for my one good, the good of my employer, my co-workers, and my instructors. So, even though I am disappointed in myself and had some hard truths to face, this writing assignment was good for me.

#### References:

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