

Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing

ONLINE CONTENT (1H)

Unit Objectives:

- Select appropriate nursing interventions to manage common problems and needs of critically ill patients. (1,6,)*
- Develop strategies to manage issues related to caregivers of critically ill patients. (1,2,6)*
- Apply the principles of hemodynamic monitoring to the nursing and interprofessional management of patients receiving monitoring. (1,2,6,7)*

*Course Objectives

Assignment:

Review- Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing PowerPoint.
Read the case study, then answer the case study questions below.

CASE STUDY

- Margaret Mayfield is a 62 year old female who has been admitted from the ED to the critical care unit, after calling 911 due to severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. Her past medical history includes: dwarfism, HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and has a chronic Foley catheter due to urinary retention. She lives alone in an apartment and has no family members. Her friend is her POA for healthcare, and is the only contact listed. She has a home health aide visit once a week to assist her with bathing and all of her meals are delivered from local take-out restaurants. She utilizes a walker at home, however reports she hasn't been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever. She uses a private ambulance service to go to physician appointments; this is the only time she gets out of her apartment for the last three years. Home medications include carvedilol, simvastatin, aspirin, and insulin. She does not have her medications with her and does not know the doses.

Case Study Questions

Place your answers to these questions in the “Unit 1: Overview CC dropbox” by 1/7/2026 at 0800. Be prepared to share and discuss your thoughts in class.

In order to receive full credit (1 hour class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time and must be completed by the end of the semester to pass the course.

- ▶ As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?

The overall immediate concerns I have include her vitals, the grade and source of her fever, the source of her weakness and fatigue, and maintaining and monitoring her chronic conditions (primarily by monitoring blood glucose, checking foley), as well as determining medication details and compliance.

- ▶ Describe ways in which you would communicate with her and her POA for healthcare. Include what topics you would discuss at this time in her hospitalization.

The ways in which I would communicate with her and her POA would include having members of the care team physically at the bedside discussing topics, being sure to involve her and her POA in decisions, asking pertinent questions related to any concerns they have (ethical, care plan), asking if they have any questions or other concerns. The topics that would be discussed include members of the care team, the current care plan, briefly introduce/explain what interventions are expected at the time, explain devices or alarms, etc.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.

The ethical issues this case presents includes any possible disagreement between the care team, POA, and the patient, primarily on decisions related to the care plan. One such issue could be the decision related to outcome in the case of a life-threatening event such as MI or stroke, or need for mechanical ventilation.

- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.

The legal issues this case presents includes keeping all information related to the patient within HIPAA guidelines. In this case, it is possible that disagreements between the patient and her POA could arise in court intervention, and the patient's ability to make decisions for herself will have to be determined.

- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

As the critical care nurse I will serve as Margaret's advocate by using advanced clinical judgment and moral agency to help determine things such as her mental capacity for care plan decisions, advocating based on judgment in the case of disagreements. I would also extend invitations to the patient and POA to ask any questions and to address any concerns they might have, and lastly I would personalize my care for the patient and use my skills to best understand patient needs (such as persisting pain with medication).

- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?

The other departments I would involve in her care include physicians, pharmacy, respiratory, social work, dietary/dietitian, and PT. For the critical care patient with advanced needs, several of the mentioned departments are needed to prevent things such as hospital acquired conditions as well as to ensure optimal basic functioning and prevent avoidable conditions or situations (dietitian, PT, social work). The other departments (physician, pharmacy, respiratory) will be used in the ways already mentioned in addition to treating acute conditions.