

Destinee Randles

Hospice Inpatient

Hospice inpatient was a great experience and I learned so much. My expectations for this clinical were so much different than how the clinical went. I expected all of the patients to be extremely ill and not very engaged in their care. I did not expect the patients to be as talkative as some of them were. We started out the day by getting report from the night shift nurses. My nurse, Lori then began to plan out her day. She started looking at who had meds due at which times and who should be seen first. It was also very different to me that we only had three to four patients since on a med surg floor the nurses normally have five. We got eight AM meds done and made sure the patients were comfortable and relaxed. We helped all the patients eat who wanted lunch, talked with families, keeping them updated and ensured we documented every two hours on our patients.

One thing that stood out to me was how different the documentation was compared to what we are used to. Only the night shift nurses document a head to toe assessment. The daytime nurses focus on more of how their cognitive functions are, their mood throughout the day and their pain level throughout the day.

There were several main points that really made my hospice experience great and educational. One key point that really opened my eyes about hospice is how important communication is with the family. Some patients can speak for themselves, but others cannot and that's where the family must step in. My nurse, Lori, did an amazing job communicating with our patients' families. Keeping them updated, making sure she always told them what she was doing and what medications they were receiving and just overall making sure they are

comfortable. Some families stayed with their loved one's day in and day out and that can be very exhausting for them. Another key point about hospice that made my experience great was how many volunteers come into hospice to help in any way possible. I met so many people walking around the unit that stopped and talked to me and majority of them were volunteers. It was truly heart warming to see so many people willing to take time out of their lives to help complete strangers in any way they could. One volunteer said to me, "I like to go around the unit to each patient and just introduce myself" and that made my entire day. One last incident that I endured during my hospice rotation was the most eye opening for me. Someone passed away on the unit and I got to help with end of life care. We gave him a bag bath, shaved his face and put him in a fresh gown with fresh sheets. This patient had T-cell lymphoma and was believed to have necrotizing fasciitis. He had a giant hole in his upper buttocks that went all the way up through his groin. He had so many subcutaneous hematomas or blood blisters all over his body. While we were washing him, he was bleeding everywhere. It was such a sad site but a new experience for me. This patient was a veteran, so after we cleaned him, they did a veteran's honor walk for him. With the family and us staff walking behind him they pushed him around the unit and laid the flag on him while reciting a poem. This was an amazing opportunity for me, and I am glad I got to help aid in his care even for that short period of time. It was so amazing experiencing how much hospice does for their patients.

This experience definitely changed my outlook on hospice. I had no idea exactly how much they did for their patients and their families. They work so hard every day to ensure their patients and the families are comfortable and having the best experience possible. The experience actually made me want to volunteer for hospice in my spare time. I really enjoyed

helping with their care and talking with their families. Most of the families I talked to had a very positive outlook which made things easier for everyone.

My overall feelings about hospice are great. I don't think people realize how much they actually do, and they would be surprised. It is a great facility and I would not question it at all if it were any of my family members. Hospice is filled with amazing people and they do an incredible job every day.