

Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Tell me about a mistake you in the clinical setting and how you managed it.

One morning during my clinical rotation on a medical-surgical floor, my preceptor asked me to get vitals on a couple of her patients. If any patients are deemed unstable or were questionable, let her know otherwise and chart the patient's vitals. I took vitals on all the patients I was asked to do, and everyone seemed to be within normal limits. I took on tasks between patients, such as helping one to the bathroom, ordering breakfast, and making linen changes. Later that morning, my preceptor asked if I got vitals on a specific patient because it wasn't documented on the computer. It turns out that I forgot to input vitals on that patient and immediately apologized, then recorded the vitals. As a result, I learned the importance of staying organized to focus on my goals and manage my time effectively. Making to-do lists will allow me to multi-task and ensure that my tasks are completed. I also learned that I could also real-time chart and be logged into the computer in the room and immediately input information into the computer, saving me time in the future.

2. Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem creatively.

During one of my clinical rotations, I took care of an older patient who had a colostomy and was a one assist. I went in to check on her, and she was upset. After listening to her, she said someone told her they would help her empty her ostomy bag but hadn't returned yet. I told her I could help her and looked in the bathroom for supplies and asked her if there were any supplies I needed to get before we got started. She said she was frustrated because she didn't have a squeeze bottle that she usually uses at home to clean out the ostomy bag. I saw a triangular cylinder used to measure intake and output near the sink in the room and asked her if we could try using that. As we were cleaning out the ostomy bag, she said she wanted a squeeze bottle, and since I couldn't leave her in the bathroom by herself to look for one, I pressed the call light button. A healthcare tech came in, and after brainstorming, we decided to try using a large plastic syringe. As a result, I listened and came up with an idea to solve her needs.

3. You and your preceptor are preparing to administer several medications to a confused client. Your preceptor scans and opens all the medication ahead of time in the med room and says, "we aren't supposed to do it like this without scanning the patient, but it saves us a lot of valuable time." What do you do?

It will be a difficult conversation, but I would kindly ask the preceptor why the patient is confused? Confusion may be a sign of a severe illness in older adults. Does the patient have delirium or dementia? Is it the patient's baseline? Is the patient diabetic? Could the confusion be caused by insulin, medication reactions, or an infection? I would listen to what the preceptor says to determine the cause of the confusion and see if we can effectively treat it. I would then tell the preceptor that I understand that nurses have a lot to do and that time management skills are essential for success and let me know if there is anything I can do to help him or her.