

Chanho Kwak
Reflective Journal #1

I was very excited to begin this semester in Maternity and Pediatrics. My first clinical day began in Blythedale Children's Hospital. We began the day with orientation of the clinical, hospital policy, procedures, and touring the different hospital units. Blythedale was a children's hospital that had many other services specifically tailored to children's needs. We visited the different pods, school, physical therapy units, and other support departments. Afterwards, we were assigned a patient and completed an assessment with them. I was assigned a 5 y/o male. I found the nurse who was assigned to the patient and introduced myself. Erica and I shadowed her as she cared for her patients and we assisted her with them. She gave us a report of our patients and I completed an assessment of my patient. My patient was unable to communicate with me.

The greatest challenge I experienced during the clinical day was overcoming my feeling of inadequacy. I felt this way because I had taken med surg during the summer and it had been over 5 months since the last time I was in a clinical setting doing assessments. I continued to review the materials during the fall semester but I still felt inadequate. But throughout the day, many things came back to me and I started to remember the things that I learned. I'll become more confident as we continue to spend more time in clinicals and learn more about our patients through lecture and reading.

My professional growth for the week was very spiritual. This hospital reminded me of my time at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center when I spent time as a chaplain on the pediatric unit. It was a struggle because I wrestled with a lot of questions. It's internally writhing to see infants, babies and children with terminal illnesses that they have no control over. I questioned God's justice, goodness and mercy. We have this internal moral compass that tells us that this isn't fair. It's even harder because there is no easy answer. An easy answer wouldn't require faith. Wrestling with challenging issues and questions deepen our faith and understanding.

My accomplishments during the week were getting to school and clinicals on time while balancing work and family. I would evaluate my technical skills as unsatisfactory, because I had to go back to the clinical packet often to review the general survey and assessment. I'll have to review my skills so that it's more natural by the next clinical session.

My interpersonal communication skills with clients, family members, staff, faculty and other students were clear and effective. There was no confusion, misunderstanding, or miscommunication.

During the clinical, there were no opportunities for teaching my patient. I interacted with him as best as I could but there was no response from him. The occupational therapist performed a gaze exercise with the patient and I learned that the patient responds with his gaze.

For my next clinical, I'll be better prepared by reviewing relevant pediatric materials. I can review my shift assessment and review the growth charts.

This week, the passage that has helped me is Isaiah 43:2. It says:

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

This reminds me that even though we have doubts, challenges, and questions we have no answer to, God will be there with us. We don't have all the answers to why children suffer and these questions can confound us. But if we trust in God's goodness, we can find strength to serve those around us.