Spirituality in Clinical Practice

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Introduction

Clinical experience for a nursing student is a new beginning and an overall experience. It's an experience that, for me, was out of the ordinary and made me get out of my comfort zone to take care of real-life patients while also learning important things I need to know as a future nurse. It was a very anxious moment for me because I am a very shy individual, but at the same time, I felt a sort of excitement to start participating in activities at the hospital, which is something I've dreamed of forever. These clinical experiences for sure set you up to go through things that you're going to have to experience at one point or another. It's where a student can get that knowledge from their instructor as well as the nurses on the floor to start developing that sort of nursing practice and apply it for future reference. Being presented with things like hands-on activities has furthered my knowledge as a student nurse and helped me develop competence and confidence in patient care. Another important aspect of clinical practice that I gained as a nursing student was developing my clinical skills in the nursing process and how important it is to follow that order of assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and lastly evaluation.

I love engaging in the process of learning new things at a pace that makes me feel comfortable, knowing that I'm just learning and making mistakes is okay. Throughout my experience in a clinical setting, I was able to learn more about myself and how spirituality played a role in my patient care during my time at the hospital. I feel that, as a nurse, there must be that connection with your patient to adequately provide the care that they need. For instance, if the nurse is caring for the patient by doing what is necessary but isn't truly connecting with them and caring for their wellbeing, that can most definitely alter that patient's recovery, and they might not want care from that nurse because they might feel unwelcome. Seeing that image of

God in your patients is essential when becoming a nurse, and I can for sure say that I have experienced this during my clinical practice.

Spiritual Experience

My personal spiritual and clinical experience consisted of a patient who was having some difficulties with the staff at the hospital. She felt as if they weren't caring for her and were more like rushing through her whenever they provided care. I began listening to her concerns and felt this kind of hurt as if I were in her position. While she was expressing her feelings to me about the situation that was going on, one of the CNAs that was assigned to her came in with this negative attitude and just bad energy overall. I was of course going to take care of my patient, so I simply offered to do her assigned morning hygiene care, and she just placed the required items on the counter in some sort of gesture as if she didn't like me being there with my patient, but I just proceeded to take care of my patient. After that had just happened, my patient went on to say, "You see what I mean, they are so mean to me", and I felt so useless, even though it wasn't necessarily my fault. All I could do was tell her that I am so sorry she has to go through this, but I can assure her that I will make sure she gets that comfortable feeling with me and provide for her needs and her wellbeing. I didn't necessarily know her like that, but I just saw and felt God's energy from her and how much I needed to protect her at all costs. I made sure I had that patient and, in this case, a nursing student relationship with her so that she felt comfortable with me.

That experience had a great impact on me because it challenged me and my beliefs on how humans are supposed to care for one another and how we're all supposed to love each other regardless of the situation. I wouldn't want to see any of my family members go through such a thing, so it made me feel more obligated to care for my patient. I just feel that God would have

wanted me to do the right thing and stand up for her and report the incident, but I felt that as a student nurse, I had so little say in what happened in their facility and that my role in this was to care for my patient and listen to them. This experience made me want to become a better individual and keep developing spiritually as a nurse because God put me in that situation for a reason, which was to protect my patient and stand up for her by making sure that no harm was being done to her.

This experience for sure had an impact on my patient because it made her feel like she wasn't welcomed and understood, especially when she hadn't caused any harm to the workers. Although it started as a bad situation, I made sure to tell my patient that I understand her, hear her, and sincerely apologize for what she had to go through. I then offered if I could do anything for her, and she let me provide oral hygiene as well as clean her up because she wanted to feel "pretty" which I made sure of, and in doing that, it made me the happiest person ever knowing I could help and be there for her in any way. I felt happy knowing I left her that day feeling much better than she did when I first went in to see her, as she said "Thank you so much for everything; you are so kind". All I could do then was pray for her, that God watches over her, takes care of her while she is there, and that she fully recovers as she gets ready to have her arm surgery.

As God believers, and also in this case, nursing students we're taught to care for others regardless of whether we know the person on a personal level, which to me has never been a hard thing to do. I hope to give that love to my future patients and have that spiritual connection with them, where God can help us all learn how to communicate with each other and care for one another.