

Spirituality in Clinical Practice

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The News

It's 7:00 am on a Friday, and I am at North Central Bronx Med Surg Unit getting ready for my assigned patient. So far from the previous week, I was assigned to patients who were expected to thrive and were able to perform their ADLs without assistance. Once my partner and I received today's patient's report, I felt nothing but empathy for the patient I was about to meet. My assigned patient is in for pneumonia due to an unspecified infectious organism; they are also diagnosed with Stage IV Adenocarcinoma and waiting for hospice care placement. Before meeting my patient, I prepared myself to be positive and provide the best care I could for this patient. Once I introduced myself to my patient, I was surprised at how sweet and calm they were. As I assessed my patient, I saw that she had a colostomy bag, a stage IV pressure injury, and IPC on both legs, which was also on their chart. It's a sad feeling knowing that my patient is entering the end stages of their life and being nonchalant about it made me feel calmer about their situation.

Let's Reflect

Seeing what my patient is going through reminded me of my aunt, who passed away in hospice care during the pandemic. My aunt was ready and prepared to be with our Savior; she made sure to complete her funeral arrangements, so her family wouldn't have to do much while we mourned her. My family and I weren't able to attend the funeral due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions to Canada. Caring for my patient just showed me how calm my aunt may have been during hospice care. This made me think about how prepared I am to leave this world behind. Am I spiritually ready to accept the end of my life? Will I show the identical resilience as my aunt and the many fearless patients I encountered when it's time for me to face death?

Where Do I Go from Here Spiritually?

There's a vast difference between attending church and attending to patients. You can read your bible and listen to the sermons preached by your Pastor. But you can only have a spiritual connection with experience. It does not only have to be in a clinical or health setting. But knowing that you will constantly encounter someone who will pass away makes you think about your life and how you would want to leave this world. To become a better Christian nurse, I must continue to learn, grow spiritually, and support my patients in their decisions. I felt like my aunt could've lived on for many more years and caring for my patient reminded me that I needed to focus more on growing spiritually. I aspire to be prepared and calm when it is my time to pass on and thinking about it now is very scary since there's so much more I want to accomplish. But what is most important is my relationship with God. And through that relationship, I show compassion to everyone I encounter.

Nursing in a brighter light!

That clinical experience alone prepared me for the future encounters I must accept, no matter the outcome. It made me more aware from time to time again how merciful God is and blessed health providers are to have the strength and knowledge to care for patients. Many people are not able to see what is going on in other settings around the world and can go home to their families and feel comfortable. To be better nurses, we must give them the care we would give to our families and treat them the same way we would for our loved ones. Patients cannot always fully experience the love they get from their own family in a hospital setting, so we, as nurses, are their family. We must attend to them so they don't feel that void.

From that experience, no matter what patient I encounter, I will always try to show them the love I would give to the people I care about. That alone may change the patient's mood and

allow them to cooperate. I also know that not all patients will accept the life changes their medical diagnosis will cause. I am also responsible for showing a positive attitude and not giving up on them even when they show signs of failure to thrive. Honesty and encouragement through communication play a massive factor in patients feeling better no matter the severity of their condition. I may not be perfect, but my spirituality will continue to grow with the guidance of God and my experiences with my patients.