

Spirituality In Clinical Practice

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Working in healthcare as a nurse technician has not only been a privilege but also a humbling journey as well. I've worked in healthcare since 2011 and I've gained a remarkable amount of experience while caring for various demographics since. Though there are many significant memories to choose from, a few years ago, I had an unforgettable encounter while working with a nineteen-year-old oncology patient. Though his diagnosis shocked him and his family, his positive outlook amid his difficult situation changed my perspective on life.

In elementary school, my teachers started the new school year off by asking us our names and what we wanted to be when we grow up. Most of us answered with "I'm not sure" or "I want to be like my mom and dad". We are taught from a young age to envision our future selves and when we reach adulthood, we hope that our dreams of becoming what we envisioned, come true. As a young nineteen-year-old boy, my patient's aspiration of joining the NFL as a future football player came crashing down when he received his Leukemia diagnosis.

Upon admission, his nurse and I discussed completing a physical exam and asked him in-depth questions related to his cancer. Once his assessment was complete, he began to ask how our night was and discussed his leisure activities back home. However, all I could think of was how remarkably optimistic he truly was. It amazed me to see him not allow his circumstances to wear him down. He was my patient for three nights in a row and remained positive with a smile on his face each day.

He remained in the hospital for approximately one month to receive continuous chemotherapy treatment and was discharged after. At the time, I believed that his treatment was working, and he was finally able to go home and move forward with his life. Eight months later, my patient was re-admitted back to my unit but this time, he was unrecognizable. His name was familiar, but I was unable to picture him until I saw him waiting for his nurse and I to complete

## Spirituality In Clinical Practice

his admission to our unit. “Rebekah, do you remember me? I’m back for my treatment!”. These words struck a chord in my heart, and I began to feel overwhelmed with mixed emotions. How could a young child go through so much and yet, continue to remain positive with a smile on his face? My patient's perseverance taught me that our lives here on earth are limited. With each day that passes by, we must live as though it were our last and thank God for the life he has given us.

My reflection on this patient has reminded me of how faithful God has been in my life, even when I’m undeserving of his grace and mercy. The gift of life and all that it has to offer can testify to God’s grace. The Bible teaches us to count each day as a blessing and never take our life for granted. Seasonal transitions in life can be wrapped up with unknown opportunities or even fearful situations. Moments where I am presented with unknown circumstances or faced with fear, I persistently ask God to grant me wisdom and strength to overcome these challenges. If you asked my younger self to pray when facing challenges, I would have turned the other way. However, God has placed me in situations that require me to reach out to him instead of seeking others or simply handling it on my own.

As a future nurse, I truly believe that the power of prayer brings healing and clarity if we ask for it. This aspect of prayer can be implemented when patients seek guidance or strength from us to recover from their illness during their hospitalization. Working in the Oncology unit has brought me to patients, who despite their diagnosis, believed that they will recover from their illnesses through the power of prayer. Another patient of mine had his family stay overnight and throughout the night, I would see the parents pray and read scriptures from the Bible to their child as she was asleep. I asked my patient’s mother if she needed anything from me and she replied, “can you pray for my child to receive healing so she can go home and live a healthy life?”. Tears streamed down my face as I embraced this patient’s mother.

## Spirituality In Clinical Practice

At that moment, we sat together and prayed for her child to receive healing and had faith that God would hear our prayers. A few weeks passed, and I was assigned the same patient during my shift again. After obtaining her vitals and asking about her treatments, she informed me that she was being discharged within a few hours. It was truly a miracle to see that her family's prayers were finally answered after a period of waiting. My patient erupted into tears and embraced me and her nurse with a hug and farewell. The memory of our patients will live with us forever because of the impact they have made in our hearts. Their journey and story from the beginning to the very end illustrate the pathway God leads us on.

I am thankful to have incredible memories of my experience as a nurse technician. The nursing profession teaches us to cherish our loved ones, remain thankful for each day that we are blessed with, and have compassion while caring for others in their time of need. To have this opportunity and be a part of the nursing profession is an honor. I pray that God will continue to use my strengths and weaknesses to serve others as I continue my journey to become a nurse.