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NUR 301

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Spirituality in Clinical Practice

There are many responsibilities of a nurse, one of the most important responsibilities of a nurse is to treat your patients not as patients but as human beings. It is of the utmost importance to create a connection with your patient so that they can feel at ease during what may be a stressful, or even traumatic time for them. Yes, nurses save lives, but it is not just about technicalities, the emotional safety and health of your patient is crucial. I have had many educational clinical experiences but the most life changing experience was one with my patient who suddenly lost all sensation in her body. Through empathy, patience, and our belief in God, I was able to create a deep connection with her and even encourage her to participate in her care plan when she was once afraid to. I believe my experience with this patient had a large impact on my spiritual growth and actually inspired me to re-connect with my faith and to grow my faith in God deeper all from this patient influence and the connection we made. This connection was a reciprocated benefit, she was able to improve her health condition, and I was able to learn how to become a better nurse, and re-kindle my relationship with God.

The experience I had with my patient at clinical was healing, transformative, educational, and meaningful. It was a cold Thursday morning; I entered the Hospital Building at 6:45am to start my clinical rotation; I was eager and excited to learn. Once I arrived at the floor my clinical was, I reported to my instructor for an assignment. I was then assigned to patient X (for privacy reasons I will use this), I saw she was admitted for a neurological disease called multiple

sclerosis. Patient X was completely alert and oriented, but she was in constant pain, and had so much difficulty moving her legs and hands that she could no longer walk nor use her hands to feed herself or use her phone. She was admitted 2 days ago, and her condition was very sudden, so understandably she was very closed off, cold, angry, frustrated, and not very willing to work with me. I introduced myself and told her I had to administer her medications with my instructor and complete a head-to-toe assessment on her and I asked her if that was ok; and her response was “Why does everyone always have to evaluate me! I just want to get out of here and go home! But fine! If you must do it just get it over with, but NOT now. I want my privacy and I am in so much pain”. In response, I validated her experience, I was gentle with her, and ensured I would get the nurse to address her pain. I also consistently checked up on her so that she did not feel neglected. When I validated her frustrations, she continued to vent to me, I just listened to her, nodded my head, and she began to cry and said she just wants to go home and get better. Through empathy I was able to break down her walls, understand the true nature of her anger and frustration. It was understandable after all, she had just experienced an extreme life-changing event; she was an independent woman, did everything on her own for her and her husband and suddenly, she could not function. This was one of many experiences I have had where a patient who seems so angry and bitter just really wants to be listened to, they want their needs addressed, they really need empathy, and somebody to listen to them.

The clinical experience did have spiritual meaning and significance to me and my life for many reasons. The two main ways this experience impacted me because the patient and I eventually bonded over our relationship with God. Also, this clinical experience allowed me to use the gifts God gave me; the gift of empathy and service. Without this experience I would not have been inspired by this woman to re-ignite my faith in God. This is how my experience was

transformational, because we were both talking about our faith in God and she was explaining the importance of going to church and finding a community was. She read me bible verse Psalm 91:1-16 ESV “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wing you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day...”. We spoke about this verse as a reminder that worshipping God at church is essential to dedicating and surrendering your life to him. I had been facing so much hardship moving here from San Francisco, California, away from my family, and starting nursing school that I had been so consumed with my stress. I let my stress and woes take me further from my God and this woman gave me the reminder that if I surrender, and worship him, all evil will be rebuked from my life as I trust his path. Since then, I have found a great church and community where I have continued on my spiritual journey to. Becoming closer to God Our Father. Not only this, I learned that so much can come from surrendering even to the moment. I surrendered to the patient, I was intimidated at first but once I let go of fear, we created a connection and in this connect I was able to help her see hope for her situation. She was in a more welcoming mood to participate in her patient care plan so that she may improve her health and hopefully get discharged. The way I care for my patients impacts their lives because I not only cater to their physically health whole-heartedly but also their mental health.

The experience I had with patient X, was transformative in an educational and spiritual way. This experience has taught me that there is so much power in a conversation, showing interest in the needs of the patient, asking them questions related to their life so they could ease

their fears or stresses of being hospitalized. These experiences solidified for me that I am meant to be a nurse because God has blessed me with the gifts of empathy and service. He always finds his way back to me no matter what. Also, it is important to recognize how nursing is not just taking care of patients and saving their lives; rather, it is wholesome care of physical and mental health, it is being intentional about your actions and care for your patient, and being sensitive to their needs. The fruits of this labor is meaningful connections, changing peoples lives and even creating a change in your life.