

“My Most Memorable client”

It is not difficult for me to identify my most memorable client. He was the first client whom I came into contact with during my very first clinical rotation. He was a 23-year-old white male who was H.I.V. positive, and by the time I met him, the virus had manifested itself into full-blown A.I.D.S. He had an Omayo Reservoir Shunt placed in his brain, and the reason for his return was that it had become infected. Consequently, the physicians had to remove the shunt, wait for the infection to clear, and then replace it. He also suffered from Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and when I checked his labs, he had a T-cell count of around 2 or 3. He suffered with a lot of pain, and when I read his chart, I learned that he did not have familial support, but lived with a friend.

Our relationship only lasted 2 days, because I was assigned to him for only the first week of our Med/Surg 1 clinical rotation. During that time he and I chatted and began to get to know each other a bit. He spoke of his cancer, but did not speak at all about the A.I.D.S. There were a lot of things going through my mind, but the question about this man that most stood out in my mind was, “If he was only 23 years old, when did he acquire the virus? My heart went out to him because he has probably lived most of his life fighting this illness, and so we had conversations every time I came to his room to check on him. I thought to myself, “I am not that much older than him. How would I feel if I became H.I.V. infected at such a young age?”

I learned a lot about him as a person, not as a patient during our conversations. He made me aware that he was frequently admitted to the hospital for his condition, and he explained the things he enjoyed doing when he was not in the hospital. All the while, I just sat there and listened. My impression just from listening to him talk was that by the time we met, he had become accepting of his condition and that he would live life to its fullest until he was unable to live life anymore. My approach and plan of nursing care to

this man was to control his pain, socialize with him and be a listening ear to *whatever* he wanted to talk about, and at the same time divulge some personal information about myself, so that he would feel comfortable with me. (Which was not a problem for me because I love to socialize). I had 7 ½ weeks of that rotation. He was admitted three times during my rotation, and each time I saw his chart, I would go to his room and visit with him. If I ran into him in public, I am sure he would know who I am and I know for a fact I would definitely know who he was.

In summery, I believe we taught each other some things. He taught me that life could throw some extreme twists that we all have the inner strength to accept and deal with. Strength that we never thought we had until life throws us a challenge. I taught him that there are people out there, like myself that will give him compassionate, nonjudgmental, understanding nursing care. It was my pleasure having been assigned to him as my first client to care for and I learned from him. Clinically, as well as socially.