

### **Most Memorable Client Essay**

I have had many life-changing and truly humbling experiences throughout my nursing education thus far. One patient in particular sticks out in my mind the most when I think of how much one patient has impacted the future of my nursing career. This patient helped instill in me the importance that patient care is not solely providing pharmacologic and medical interventions, but providing holistic care that encompasses the patient's mind, body, and soul and care of the family as well.

The patient was a 16 year old male who had suffered a traumatic brain injury in an automobile accident. He was flown to UofM Hospital after rescuers worked for over an hour to get him out of the wrecked car. I first worked with him about a month after his accident; he was ventilator dependent, receiving tube feedings, and completely immobile. When he was responsive to sensory stimuli, his responses were extremely delayed. His care was intensive; he frequently needed to be suctioned, required continence care, tracheostomy care, bathing, administration of several drugs, required turning and range of motion exercises, as well as occupational and physical therapies daily.

The patient's family was never away from his bedside. The family had many questions; some I was able to answer immediately and with confidence, but when I could not, I made it a point to check with my resources and get back with them as soon as I found the answers. It was a tremendous learning experience and rewarding at the same time. I was able to teach them many things concerning his care, things that they could then begin to do themselves and this helped them to feel empowered.

Frequently, I would accompany the patient at occupational therapy. I can't describe the feeling of pure happiness it was to see this young man able to do a simple

thing such as initiate swallowing movements when his lips were stimulated with ice. On one day, a therapy dog was brought in and placed on his lap. He initiated movement to sit-up and pet the dog, which was the biggest accomplishment that anyone had seen yet. The patient was a very active and athletic young man, who particularly liked soccer. I brought in a Sports Illustrated magazine and flipped through soccer pictures with him. I would bring in the newspaper and read all the college football scores and stories to him. Although, it was unsure if he could comprehend what I was saying it was important that he have normal stimulation and feel care from everyone around him.

At the end of the semester, my work on the pediatric unit with him was to be complete. I thanked his father for allowing me to work with his son and his family. His words meant more to be than a thousand A's on any exam could ever have. He told me "you truly care about people...that is what is important in your career...you are going to make one heck of a nurse soon."