

### **My Most Memorable Clinical Experience**

The time was 2300 and my shift was finally over for the evening. I was exhausted and ready to go home after a long day of caring for a very demanding patient. As I walked down the hall on my way off the Med-Surg floor, I noticed a patient's call light was on and went in somewhat reluctantly to see what she needed. I went in the room and discovered that the client's IV tubing had been kinked and was unable to infuse. The infusion pump was beeping loudly and the client was noticeably worried. I untangled the tubing and reset the pump so it would stop beeping. Even though the problem was fixed, she was still obviously upset.

"I heard that a 'Code Blue' was called," she said with a very distressed look on her face. "Did someone on this floor die?"

I calmly assured her that the Code Blue was for a different floor and that the patients on her floor were all being taken care of. I was anxious to leave, so this was a failure at communicating therapeutically. My reassurance did not seem to help her, so I offered to give her a backrub to help her relax and go to sleep. She readily agreed to this so I began to massage her back with lotion. I could tell that she was still anxious, so I asked her if anything else was making her upset. She replied, "I wish my husband could be here with me, but he's very tired and had to go home to sleep."

She told me that her husband of forty-two years was a great encouragement to her while she was in the hospital. She went on to talk about her first marriage and how her first husband was abusive. She explained that she was eventually able to get out of the relationship, but that the experience had scarred her. I began to realize that this woman was very lonely and afraid of being mistreated in the hospital. I stopped thinking about wanting to get home as soon as possible and began encouraging her to express her feelings about the matter. I continued to massage her back muscles and listen to her speak about her experiences

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for almost ten minutes. When she indicated that she had had enough of a backrub, she thanked me and I left for the night.

As I was driving home, it occurred to me that I had met a need in a simple but very meaningful way. Seemingly insignificant tasks become undeniably rewarding when they make a difference for someone in an obvious way. Efforts as elementary as giving a massage and caring for a patient's emotional needs are very important aspects of nursing care. In the end, I was very glad that I had answered the call light and stayed at clinical for an extra twenty minutes.