



# P POSITIVITY INSPIRES MORALE

**Wu Chiu-Feng, Director of Nursing Department, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital**

In the times when the entire hospital was mobilized to attend to the dust explosion victims, I practically report straight to the burn ward when arrive at work, share the hectic workload so the staff could remain undistracted. I once emptied a patient's urine bag when I noticed the bag was closed to full, and the nurse, who noticed my action, quickly responded: "Director! You shouldn't be doing this, let me handle it!"

I am, indeed, a director. However, I never believe that there is a task too low for a director to handle. I was truly impressed by how devoted everyone was in a dire time of need. Since I am not a person who is accustomed to hugging or solacing, I put my sentiments into action, ensuring that all of the nurses could focus solely on the work at hand without any distraction.

As our staff and resources were redirected to saving the victims of June 27 2015 dust explosion, we could not ignore other patients in the hospital. How many staff would



I need, I thought to myself, and how many? From where? It would best that they are matured, experienced seniors who are willing. Patience is undoubtedly a prerequisite to manage a surge of trauma patients of this scale.

After a brief discussion with my supervisor, we convened with all head nurses to discuss potential candidates. The head nurses were cooperative and proposed a list of candidates from various departments who are experienced in burn treatment. We then selected 8 out of the list and divided these senior nurses into two burn dressing teams. Considering the high staff demands, I attempted to recruit more willing staff to join the team.

As I sent an email to request for more assistance, the overwhelming responses were certainly inspirational. "Director, schedule my shift however you see fit," one mail wrote. "Do you have sufficient staff for burn dressing? My wife can help," another mail asked. It turned out that the sender, a doctor, has a wife who was a nurse and was eager to help. There were several staff planning on leaving the job postponed their resignation.

The number of nurses reported in every day far exceeded the numbers we had originally scheduled. When I check on the ward, many nurses who were not on shift were present. “Why are you here,” I asked them. “We are here to see what we can do to help,” they answered. Some came back during off-hours, claiming that they could not sleep while their colleagues were overwhelmed.

The head nurses encouraged the nurses to support and learn about burn care, knowing that once the patients transfer to general ward, everyone has to be capable of nursing burn patients. “We build a positive patient-nurse relationship while assisting, making the transition easier.”

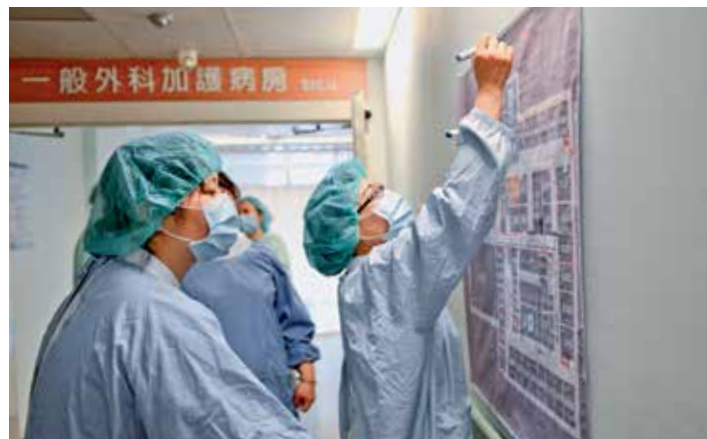
Fortunately, members of Tzu Chi medical and educational missions volunteered to share our burden. The family like support was heartwarming. Why would people from all over eager to offer their assistance? They want to lessen the suffering of the patients, and the burden of the medical staff, by contributing their time and expertise. That is why I always consider myself fortunate, to have such a great team, working in perfect sync in the face of major accident. I have no idea where the strength comes from, I





only know that everyone, including the head nurses, came without orders, sacrificing their vacations and time with family, just like sisters. This heartwarming positivity certainly raised the morale of the entire team.

Burn ward is quite different than other hospital wards, so when I saw a cleaning lady confused as to how to proceed, I showed her by cleaning the ward myself. She seemed moved, but so was I. Everyone treated these patients like a family, including the cleaning ladies.



Frankly speaking, it was tough, but rewarding. The accident awakened a potential within our team no one ever expected, to handle such a major emergency in such a short time. The emotional rollercoaster was certainly exhausting, as we were so attached to the patients' conditions.

Now that the young patients were discharged one by one, we could finally take a rest. We will still be there during their rehabilitation, hoping these youths can walk bravely into their future.