



*Please Listen to Me,  
Dear Head Nurse*

# From Panicking to Be Undisturbed in Clinical Practice



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A simple comment by a middle school classmate, “Why don’t we study nursing”, led me to submit an entrance application to the nursing school. After I was notified of being admitted, I still went through a university exam at my parents’ request. The family was feuding if I should attend Chiayee Girls’ High School or Taichung Nursing Technical College. Ironically, the classmate who initiated the nursing idea did not end up in nursing. My family was very much against my choice. However, I followed my dreams of helping others and to obtain medical knowledge and being rebellious. I left Yuanlin by myself after middle school to Taichung. In the blink of an eye, I have lived in this city for eight years. I spent seven years to complete five technical and two specialty requirements and left the small community of Taichung Nursing College after graduation.

Since reality is different than planning, I did not stay within a one-mile radius near the hospital. After starting in Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, I ended up working in the Obstetrics and Gynecology department, a unit I never thought I would stay long.

Clinical work and college laboratories are very different. That was my conclusion two weeks after starting at the unit. Facing new environment, unfamiliar system, and different specialty, everything had to be learned. Every step was taken cautiously to avoid error and progressed anxiously for performance and speed. However, this attitude distracted me from critical details. The basic training of medication prescription is “Read three times and cross-reference five times” to ensure the patients’ safety. However, while seeking for speed, I neglected to pay attention to the basics and made three errors in the first two months.

When I knew I was being “called” to the supervisor’s office, I was ashamed and blamed myself for making such basic errors during my probation. I kicked myself for not able to learn from my previous mistakes. I can forgive myself after the first error but after the third mistake, I could not come up with any more excuses. I remained silent throughout the interview because I knew I was the source of the issue.

I thought I would be lectured by my mentor sister because even I wanted to punish myself and wondered if I had the competency. To my surprise, my mentor only said, “Now you will always remember!” Of course, everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is to learn from those mistakes and learn from them to avoid repeating the same error.

Her words relieved some of my guilt and shame. I adjusted my pace, calmed my mind. I no longer rush through things - quality over quantity and speed for everything I do. Gradually, my panic turned into ease. My three mistakes are constant reminder to be mindful of the basics and being more attentive. One must double-check to ensure accuracy. There is no absolute certainty, even with 90% confidence, I should check with other senior staff. I am willing to share my experiences and failures with newcomers to warn them of their blind spots. When patient safety is at risk, it is a warning sign not just for the person involved but for everyone in the team. Now I am more proactive in interacting with senior staff and welcome opportunities to help other junior nurses. I no longer shy away from asking questions for fear of being ignorant. I am grateful for this change. It was the staff and culture that helped me to overcome those “failures” and grow from those experiences.







Looking back at the one short year of my nursing career, it was filled with surprises but my stay in this department is perhaps the most beautiful. Initially, I volunteered to help in order to broaden my field of expertise and as a steppingstone for my career.

Working with a diverse supporting unit requires many adjustments; it makes me appreciate the importance of teamwork. The short half-a-month project was an experience of a lifetime. My proudest moment aside from expanding my field of knowledge was that I cared for my own patients. To be self-reliant and self-competent are the biggest support I can provide to any group. After volunteering at support services, I learned more about my shortcomings. There is so much to learn about stabilizing patient's medical condition. The devils are in the details. I need to be more attentive and mindful if I want to achieve the goal of sending patients home with smiles on their faces. In the coming days, I wish to be exposed with more opportunities on training and to practice in other fields to strengthen and grow my nursing career.