



Please Listen to Me,
Dear Head Nurse

Learn from My Mistake



I made a mistake! I admitted my fault and faced it and deal with it positively. I always want to do my best to take good care of every patient, still discouragement and distress were unexpected.

My Nursing Journey Began Smoothly

An instructor in my high school who was a school nurse asked me if I wanted to major in nursing for my undergraduate. She said to become a nurse is an option and can help others. It is my desire to help others, therefore, I chose to be a nurse.

Time went fast, I successfully passed the national examination and obtained a nursing certificate right after I graduated from my 4-year college, so I chose to serve at the Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center.

Under senior sisters' careful guidance in clinical practice, I became a novice nurse and manage the routines independently with my colleagues in the wards.

I considered my nursing career as steady until an incident happened.

A Controversial Apology – I Wanted to Hide and Run

In one of my day shifts after more than 4-month clinical, I went to one of the patients to dispense medicine for infusion. After I checked the instructions on the injection package, the patient's relative was wondering about the dispersed dosage for it was different from yesterday.

Concerned but need to be take care of other patients, I peeked on the computer screen and respond, "I checked the dosage and it is correct." Then I pushed the ward trolley to the next stop.

A senior later found I did over-dose that patient. I was very nervous when I discovered the mistake, worried about the impact to the patient, for I might have committed a crime. Immediately, I felt the need to apologize to the patient for my wrongdoing, so I went to see the patient the next morning.

After my trip to talk to the patient I went back to the nursing station to report the incident. Meanwhile, the patient's relative returned and was upset about the apology. She demanded medical personnel to go over the event. I followed closely behind the supervisor who oversaw the night shift. Nervously, I went with the senior to face the patient's family and I noticed indistinctly the family member was holding a phone. Faced the patient's family aggressive questioning, I kept apologizing.



While I was back to the nursing station to continue working in an extremely shocking state, I received a phone call from my head nurse Yu. The family just put our private conversation video on social media so it attracted the news media. My colleagues helped me to finish my scheduled work and urged me to leave the office immediately to avoid the media. My colleagues were so concerned and worried about my mental state. After I went home, I only thought about making up for my mistake and end my nursing career to escape from the embarrassment.

Head Nurse Yu texted that attending doctors were discussing the potential over-dosage effect on the patient. I felt a bit relieved the following day after learning from the doctors that the course of dosage was within the reasonable range for the patient. However, I worried still, I thought about the effect might not have immediate but may appear later. I became cranky and blamed myself constantly.



Head Nurse Reminding Self-Reflection and to Bravely Face My Wrongdoing

Head Nurse Yu texted me to make sure I was safe at home that night. The next day, she talked to me face to face to understand the whole incident and also shared her concern about my mental health. After she was certain and assured about my condition, she advised me to voluntarily tell my parents about the incident better than having them find out from the news media. She also reminded me to think about how to improve myself and to reflect on the errors in order to put an end to it.

After the Ward Chief had sized up the situation, he invited the family members of that patient for a briefing. The family members asked for my presence and I agreed. I wanted to face the patient and family members bravely, so I attended the briefing.



Later, the hospital supervisor, the director of the ward, and the head of the nurse accompanied me to meet with the patient and the family members. The patient said no one would like to see this happen, but it would take great courage to tell a patient. The patient's family said I should learn from this experience and be more careful in the future. Fortunately, the patient did hope an end to it.

Grateful to Colleagues - My True Responsibility

A few days later, Head Nurse Yu conveyed colleagues' comments while I was still on annual leave. A colleague wrote, "You need to be blamed for your wrongdoing, but your courage to face it is much appreciated. This small card is

written for the latter. Our society is not very friendly to medical care giver, but you have a kind team to accompany you to grow up. I believe you blame yourself very much, but I also believe that you will be more responsible in the future...” All of these were comforting and encouraging. Undoubtedly, all the encouragements from family and colleagues motivated and supported me to keep going while I was under tremendous pressure at that time.

I did talk to my parents after the incident. They first were shocked and then expressed their sadness. Then they asked me how I think about the issue and told me to be responsible for my action. The next day, the hospital issued an official statement regarding the incident. The chief nurse officer instructed me to show it to my parents, so they could better understand the hospital’s position and feel more at ease.

After the incident, the chief nurse officer scheduled me a break, and continue a scheduled vacation to leave the environment temporarily to settle down. During the vacation, I went to my teacher who is very close to me. I didn’t explain the whole story completely nor did the teacher ask questions other than something irrelevant to the matter. However, I did feel the teacher understand the whole picture already. In our conversation, I mentioned to the teacher that I wanted to quit my job at the hospital after the incident to end my nursing career. The teacher asked me, “You can face the patients’ family and resolved the matter. Why would you choose to run afterwards?”

Restore Instinct to Help Others – Reflect on My Mishap

Having dealt with this incident and receiving support from everyone enabled me to determine to stay on. I will try to correct and improve myself, and examine where I might make mistakes.

Back to work, I discussed with my supervisor how to improve the process, change work habits and clarify things to improve work flow. I also discussed with the seniors how to deal with potential problem. As to the fundamental cause of this incident – dispersing medication, I followed up with a detailed review. In addition to a scenario simulation, I researched the areas that would be overlooked and updated the procedures.

Till today the incident is still so vivid and clear in my mind. I swear to abide by the rules of nursing, never make the same mistake twice. Step by step, I continue the path of my nursing journey to help others.