



Please Listen to Me,
Dear Senior

Details and Tips from My Preceptor



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As a child, I frequently visited the hospital due to a benign cyst in my groin area. I often saw busy staff interacting positively with patients. My mother, a nurse herself, would share stories from her work. Over time, these experiences deepened my desire to become a nurse and offer others the help and comfort they needed.

I entered the Cardinal Tien Junior College of Nursing as I wished. After graduation, I worked in a general ward of a hospital for a few months, but found that the high patients-to-nurses ratio required spending less time caring for each patient, which I was not accustomed to. At that time, my grandmother was in the terminal stage of cancer and needed care, so I decided to resign and go home to be with her. After my grandmother passed away, I started working in the surgical intensive care unit at Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital.

Senior Nurse's Handwritten Notes: Tips for Adapting to the Environment

The attributes of the surgical intensive care unit (ICU) are different from those of the general ward. Although patients' conditions are critical, I can provide them with more care and attention, which is what I prefer.

To be honest, I was very nervous when I first arrived, especially since I had never interned at a Tzu Chi Hospital before. While in college, I also never had the chance to intern in the ICU, which added to my stress. Senior Chen Yu-Hsuan, my clinical instructor, was always there to observe my progress. At first, just facing the patients was challenging, not to mention learning the hospital's computer system and getting familiar with the practices and habits of the doctors and specialists. Senior Yu-Hsuan supported me in many ways, like organizing the doctors' and specialists' unique habits and sharing her own handwritten notes. This helped me adapt quickly to the new environment and avoid the embarrassment of making naïve mistakes. Whenever I felt overwhelmed, she would take the time after work to chat with me and review how I could have handled the day's events better.

Transferring a Patient to a Different Ward Is a Major Hurdle

Transferring patients from the ICU to a general ward is a major challenge due to the different handover procedures between wards.

Whenever I transfer a patient to another ward, I have to answer questions from different senior nurses. As an ICU nurse, I find that the senior nurses in the general



wards are even more meticulous and strict about the handover. There were times when a large group of senior nurses gathered around me to check on a patient and bombarded me with various questions, making me nervous and unable to answer. I remember that during those times, Senior Yu-Hsuan would “magically appear” by my side, reminding me to stay calm and guiding me step by step on what needed to be done, so that I wouldn’t have to face the pressure alone.

At first, Senior Yu-Hsuan appeared cold and serious, and she wasn’t very talkative. But as I got to know her, I realized she had a very warm heart.

Learning to Harness the Power of Teamwork

In the ICU, we sometimes care for patients undergoing complex procedures such as ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation). Because of their critical condition, these cases are usually handled by senior nurses. During my rookie days, I helped Yu-Hsuan taking care of some of these patients. One case involved a father in his thirties who was the primary breadwinner for his family with young children. The cost associated with ECMO is significant. I felt deeply for him and struggle with what to do. Yu-Hsuan reminded me that I could contact a social worker or ask the doctor to convene a family meeting. All parties involved could then sit down together and discuss how to help this family and resolve the difficulties they were facing.

With Yu-Hsuan’s reminder, I learned that in health care, there are often situations where different professionals need to work together to have a greater impact.

This experience was very inspiring to me. I never realized how much I could help patients and their families. In the end, the family chose to withdraw life support, allowing the patient to die peacefully. Through the efforts of our team, we were able to address their financial concerns and support the emotional well-being of his wife and children.

Surviving the Challenges of Atopic Dermatitis

When I first came to the hospital, it was during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and flu season. I had received several vaccines at that time, and due to the stress of work and the side effects of the injections, I soon had a severe outbreak of atopic dermatitis all over my body. Coupled with the prolonged wearing of isolation gear, my wounds were slow to heal, making me extremely uncomfortable physically and emotionally unstable. I discussed my resignation with my supervisor, as I felt I needed to prioritize taking care of my own health first. If I couldn’t take care of my own condition, how could I possibly take care of patients?



In fact, at that time, I had already completed my three-month probationary period. When my head nurse found out, instead of letting me go, she first helped me contact the medical department to deal with my illness and informed senior Yu-Hsuan about it. Yu-Hsuan asked me, “You’re actually very suitable for this job, and it’s been hard for you to get to this point where you can be on your own. Do you really want to give up everything you’ve worked so hard for?” Her sincerity and sensitivity made me think seriously about her question, and thanks to her words, I have persevered to this day.

Growing Through the Setbacks of My First Emergency Rescue

Three months into my new job, I began working independently without the protective supervision of my senior colleague. One day, a patient’s condition suddenly deteriorated, and he needed emergency care. One moment, the patient was talking to me, and the next, he was dying. A specialized nurse rushed over to perform CPR, and I watched as the patient received CPR and died before my eyes. As the primary caregiver, I felt an overwhelming sense of guilt...



During a review meeting, Senior Yu-Hsuan did not blame me. Instead, she encouraged me by saying, “You did a great job! I’ve never come across such an unexpected CPR situation either. Although you are inexperienced, you made great efforts to find out the changes in the patient’s condition.” She then reminded me that the most important thing is to grow through introspection and encouraged me to observe and learn from the way other senior colleagues handled their cases. Her warm response soothed my very broken spirit at that moment.

Visible Growth Over Two Years: Strengthening Skills for Future Generations

As time went by, I followed the senior nurses in taking care of many heart surgery patients. Despite the difficulties, I was gradually able to master the procedures and methods. Gradually, the senior began to let go and allow me to do things independently, which gave me a great sense of accomplishment and made me feel trusted. After two years, the relationship with Senior Yu-Hsuan is no longer characterized by a hierarchical relationship; she is like a good friend and an important mentor in my nursing career.

In the blink of an eye, two years have passed since I started. Although I am still





learning, I hope that in the future I will be able to make good use of the skills taught by the seniors and pass them on to the interns or new colleagues who join the unit. I hope that my enthusiastic feedback can help them strengthen their clinical skills, feel the value of their work, and be willing to stay here.